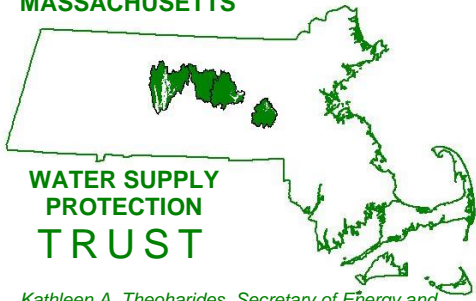


MASSACHUSETTS



Kathleen A. Theoharides, Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs
Frederick A. Laskey, Executive Director, MWRA
William Meehan, North Worcester County Quabbin Anglers, Quabbin Fishermen's Association
Louis Taverna, Chairman, MWRA Advisory Board
Fred Heyes, Swift River Valley Historical Society

Water Supply Protection Trust
Meeting Minutes from September 11, 2019
Quabbin Administration Building and Visitor Center

Trustees

Lou Taverna, MWRA Advisory Board
Frederick A. Laskey, Executive Director, MWRA
Vandana Rao, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
Brigadier General William J. Meehan, North Worcester County Anglers and Quabbin Fishermen's Association
Fred Heyes, Swift River Historical Society

MWRA

Dave Coppes, Chief Operating Officer
Carolyn Francisco Murphy, General Counsel
Mike Altieri, Associate General Counsel
Beth Card, Director of Regulatory and Environmental Affairs
Sean Navin, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs
Katie Ronan, Environmental Analyst
Michael Cole, Budget Manager
Tom Durkin, Director of Finance

DCR

John Scannell, Director, Division of Water Supply Protection
Dan Clark, Director, Quabbin/Ware Region
Ken McKenzie, Director, Natural Resources
Derek Liimatainen, Assistant Regional Director, Wachusett
Jamie Carr, Regional Director, Wachusett
Joel Zimmerman, Regional Planner
Clif Read, Supervisor of Interpretive Services
Yuehlin Lee, Director of Environmental Quality, Quabbin/Ware
Scott Campbell, Regional Engineer

MWRA Board of Directors

Jennifer Wolowicz

MWRA Advisory Board

Joseph Favaloro, Executive Director
Travis Ahern, Director of Finance and Policy

WSCAC

Lexi Dewey, Executive Director
Bruce Spencer

Friends of Quabbin

Gene H. Theroux, President
Paul Godfrey

Steven Ward – Massachusetts Resident

The meeting was convened at 10:11 am.

Trustee Laskey introduced Jennifer Wolowicz, representative of the Connecticut River Valley on the MWRA Board of Directors, and credited her with being a driving force on the Quabbin Park Cemetery issue.

1. Approval of the Minutes - The June 2019 Meeting Minutes were unanimously approved by the Trust. Trustee Laskey also noted an administrative change to the schedule – The cemetery discussion will be moved to the end of the meeting, to coincide with the tour of Quabbin Park Cemetery.

2. FY19 End of Year Report – John Scannell

- FY2019 Watershed Management Highlights
 - Land Acquisition efforts continued.
 - Gull Harassment continued – Trustee Laskey asked about using drones for Gull Harassment. DWSP is currently working with MassDOT, but may explore contracting to use drones at Quabbin. Trustee Heyes suggested comparing the annual cost of traditional gull harassment to gull harassment using drone contractors.
- Land Acquisitions – DWSP purchased 404.8 acres in FY19. There was discussion regarding funding for planned and unplanned land acquisition. Trustee Laskey mentioned the Wachusett Proposed Commercial Development project in Worcester and John noted that DCR was currently working towards a resolution and had a funding proposal.
- Barre Heath Restoration Project - Ken McKenzie explained that DWSP has worked closely with DCR Forest Fire Control to restore and maintain this habitat. They are planning to conduct a controlled burn this fall, pending approvals. This is a collaboration between agencies/communities and will be DWSP first endeavor into prescribed fire. They plan to burn the area every 3-5 years. Trustee Laskey said to make sure everything went well.
- 2018 Wachusett Deer Hunt – Was successful with 76 deer harvested. Will continue this year.
- 2018 Petersham/Hardwick Hunt – Was successful, 35 deer harvested.
- Watershed Preservation Restrictions – DWSP is using iPads for monitoring. Aim to increase site visits to meet biannual schedule. There was some discussion regarding monitoring methods and possibilities.
- Student Conservation Association – Two-week boardwalk repair project complete at Poutwater Pond in Holden.
- WQ monitoring – Continued work on flow monitoring and database development. DWSP is investigating the impacts of road salts and is sampling, meeting with communities and developing trainings for more efficient use.
- Stormwater Infrastructure – Continued work to map drainage systems, primarily in the Wachusett Watershed.
- Aquatic Invasives – Continuing efforts have been successful.
- Internal Roadwork and Drainage – Repairs at Gates 37 and 40. DWSP is working to put together a more comprehensive road management plan for Quabbin and Ware River. In response to a question from Trustee Laskey, John noted that DWSP has an inventory of storm drains/culverts and that staff are determining priority areas.
- Clinton Crew Headquarters – Work began in May 2019, hope to complete by the end of the calendar year.
- New Salem – Site clean-up is complete, but progress has stalled. Staff are currently working from a temporary building and the project design has just gone out to bid.
- Windsor Dam Turf – Continued maintenance and improvement.
- New Equipment – Multiple new pieces of equipment were purchased using EEA funding.
- Interpretive Services – Continuing effective programming and events.

- FY19 Ranger Interactions – 480 violations in the Quabbin/Ware, 498 in the Wachusett. Trustee Laskey asked about the main offences and John explained that they were mostly repeat offenders and trespassing violations. Trustee Laskey also asked about bikes in Ware River and John explained that there has been improvement on this issue. In response to a question from Trustee Heyes, John noted one incident where some individuals were found cutting trails and explained that the individuals were brought to court and put on probation.
- Sudbury Watershed – Plan to update Sudbury Public Access Plan in FY20.
- FY19 Spending – Revenue was over budget by \$262,225. Expenditures were under budget by \$2,677,019.

3. FY2020 Status - Work Plan and Budget

- Hiring Update – FTE count is unchanged at 136. Many recent retirements have resulted in a cascade of vacancies which have been filled internally. Fourteen people have left in the last 9 months. Since December 2018, 26 positions have been filled, 15 were filled by internal candidates.
 - Joe Favaloro raised concern regarding continued vacancies over the past year, despite the recent personnel assessment which identified the need for 150 FTEs. He suggested that the problem may be bigger and more systematic. Trustee Rao advised that she felt that DWSP is moving in the right direction and has been able to fill 26 positions despite retirements. Trustee Laskey referenced DWSP’s detailed Work Plan and asked whether important functions are being accomplished, despite retirements. John Scannell affirmed that DWSP continues to meet requirements and is working to fill vacancies. Trustee Laskey requested a breakdown of how long each vacancy has been vacant.
 - Jennifer Wolowicz noted that South Hadley has experienced difficulty filling positions in the wake of retirements. She suggested recruitment and to look for efficiencies in an effort to make appropriate changes. John Scannell noted that DWSP recently conducted a personnel assessment.
- Clinton Crew HQ – Expected to be completed by end of the year.
- New Salem Building Replacement – Design is out to bid with construction in FY21.
- Last Direct Discharge – DWSP is working to address the last direct discharge into the Wachusett Reservoir on Route 110, however some challenges have slowed the design process and contractors. John Scannell referenced MassDOT’s Complete Streets Requirements, which would require installation of sidewalk in the project area along a short section of roadway. John Scannell explained that despite this, they hope to have a design by the end of the year.
 - Jennifer Wolowicz noted that in her short time at the meeting she had heard about multiple instances of challenges working between agencies. She suggested that agencies should be able to work well together to accomplish mutual goals and serve the public.
 - John Scannell explained that although these challenges have extended the design process, he expects this hurdle to be overcome and the project would move forward at planned.
- Forestry - Continued hazardous tree removal in Quabbin Park Cemetery.
- Hunting - Hunting will continue as last year, with the expansion of controlled hunt into Quabbin Park
- Vehicles purchased

4. FY21 Budget – John Scannell

John Scannell explained that he and Trustee Rao had met with Tom Durkin regarding capitol finance and the possibility of capturing major DWSP projects in MWRA’s Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). He explained that for this to happen, DWSP would need to align with MWRA’s annual budget process and schedule. John Scannell proposed that DWSP adjust its schedule by presenting the annual capital plan to the Trust earlier in the year. This would allow DWSP to make it into MWRA’s CIP planning cycle.

- Trustee Rao noted that in June, MWRA asked for more regular updates from DWSP. To ensure the Trust is able to review these updates, she proposed communicating with the Trust via email prior to sharing with the MWRA Board of Directors.
- The Trustees discussed the proposal and agreed that monthly emails regarding spending updates would be amendable to the Trust, provided there is subsequent discussion at Trust meetings. Trustee Laskey noted that the MWRA Advisory Board should be included on the email distribution list.

The Trust reached a consensus agreeing to Monthly Updates via email.

John Scannell distributed DWSP's 5-year Watershed Capitol Plan to the Trust and reviewed the following highlights.

- The New Salem Maintenance Facility is budgeted at \$2.5 million.
- Quabbin Administration Building water system – DWSP is required to make improvements to the water system pursuant to a DEP consent order. They are currently investigating options.
- Some other projects in the Wachusett Watershed are included at end of the 5 years.
- Trustee Laskey noted that the original plan has morphed but that MWRA has been amenable to the changes and to picking up necessary capital programs. He thanked the MWRA Board of Directors and credited them with continuing to maintain water quality and keeping employees safe.

Trustee Laskey added that MWRA would soon be seeking approval from the Board of Directors for the Quinapoxet Dam Removal *Design and Engineering Services During Construction* and explained that the project would eventually restore 17 miles of salmon spawning habitat.

- Beth Card explained that the Office of Dam Safety has classified the dam as “hazardous”, that the dam poses significant environmental impacts, and that repairs have been estimated to cost \$200,000-\$400,000. For these reasons, removal of the dam is preferable. The project will be an interagency effort - MWRA has agreed to support Design/Engineering services and the Department of Fish and Game has indicated that there will likely be support for removal funding.
- Trustee Taverna asked how removal costs would compare with repair costs. Beth explained that MWRA has been working with Division of Ecological Restoration and Dave Coppes noted that removal of the dam provides added environmental benefits, including restoration of the natural riverbed. Trustee Laskey reiterated that the dam is no longer useful and suggested that since MDC built the dam, it is now MWRA's responsibility to remove it.

5. Certification – The Trustees signed the annual certification, which states that DWSP is spending only the allotted funding.

6. Forestry – John Scannell

John Scannell explained that it had been a much better Gypsy Moth year than anticipated across the Commonwealth. Although Quabbin staff continue Oak Salvage, there were not as significant Gypsy Moth impacts or oak mortality as anticipated and the beneficial fungus was able to materialize. Trustee Taverna asked about logging and Dan Clark noted that bids had just opened.

Trustee Laskey referenced a letter from WSCAC regarding logging site repairs and asked if the previously problematic logger had another DWSP contract. John Scannell noted the logger had lost bond funding on the problematic lot and is being closely supervised on another lot. Trustee Laskey asked about the Forester certification issue and John Scannell explained that the issue had been addressed.

7. Ware River Public Access Plan – Dan Clark

Dan explained that DWSP has been engaging with user groups throughout the spring and summer. They are working to accommodate user group requests where possible, but prioritize DWSP mission. John Scannell noted that DWSP is working to encourage user groups to be self-policing and to promote stewardship.

8. Quabbin and Wachusett Hunts – Ken McKenzie

Ken explained that DWSP is planning to expand hunting into the Sudbury Watershed and will host a public meeting to propose shotgun hunting during deer season to assess public reaction. The hunt would require a DCR permit and would include 1,200 acres after setbacks.

Ken noted that there had been high application rates for Quabbin and Wachusett hunts this year.

- Quabbin Hunt in Petersham/Quabbin Park – There was a 14% acceptance rate for applications. Petersham will be open for shotgun season.
- Wachusett – There were 632 applications for 100 permits and an additional 205 permits were added.

Jennifer Wolowicz noted that permit fees could be a potential revenue source. There was discussion regarding the closure of Quabbin Park for the hunt in early December.

Trustee Meehan referenced a video of planes flying very low over Quabbin and noted that he had previously asked for reports on serious incidences. Dan Clark explained that on July 7, 2019 three Globe aircrafts departed Barnes Airport in Westfield, MA and flew very low over Quabbin Reservoir. The pilots were identified and cited for violations. Trustee Meehan asked DWSP to follow up with the Trust on this matter. Trustee Laskey noted the importance of taking these issues seriously.

Trustee Taverna asked about the next MassDEP inspection for the filtration avoidance waiver. John Scannell explained that the Wachusett and Quabbin Inspections are in October and that DWSP\MWRA typically receive a letter in January.

9. Quabbin Park Cemetery Discussion

Gene H. Theroux, President of the Friends of Quabbin, introduced himself and his colleague Paul Godfrey. Dan Clark explained that DWSP is in the process of assessing the cemetery water system and that it appears the system may have frozen, causing leaks. MWRA applied to National Guard over the summer and received a water buffalo, which was just recently removed. MWRA recently met with DCR staff, received quotes for drilling a well and are investigating where to place taps. John Scannell noted that the intention is to move forward with drilling a well near the cemetery building and that the goal is to have it ready for the growing season next year.

Trustee Meehan said that it is unacceptable that the cemetery does not have its own line item in the budget and that this is a reflection of neglect. He suggested creating a line item for the cemetery. Trustee Laskey noted that Jennifer Wolowicz has requested updates on the cemetery at MWRA Board of Director meetings. He also suggested that the budget surplus from personnel, could be applied to the cemetery and that there will need to be discussion on priorities at the cemetery.

Trustee Meehan noted that there are other issues and that there is a level of responsibility. He explained that funding should be found and damaged gravestones of interned individuals whose families who have disappeared should be repaired. Jennifer Wolowicz added that the conditions were disrespectful and an awful reflection. Trustee Meehan also asked for the results of a report on repair and maintenance of the cemetery and Trustee Heyes suggested that cemetery maintenance could be a line item in the budget.

John Scannell noted that DWSP had recently received a repair estimate for about \$.5 million.

Trustee Meehan noted that although this issue is not directly related to water quality, it is important. Trustee Laskey noted that the MWRA Board of Directors understands the moral obligation. Trustee Taverna noted that it would be helpful to understand the magnitude of the problem.

The Trust invited attendees to the cemetery for a site visit to observe conditions. Informal conversation continued at the cemetery and attendees were given the opportunity to go inside the cemetery building, observe the exterior, view gravestones, and walk around the cemetery grounds. The site visit concluded at approximately 1pm.