



*Rebecca L. Tepper, Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs
Frederick A. Laskey, Executive Director, MWRA
William Meehan, North Worcester County Quabbin Anglers, Quabbin Fishermen's Association
Matthew A. Romero, MWRA Advisory Board
Fred Heyes, Swift River Valley Historical Society*

Water Supply Protection Trust
September 18, 2025
Virtual Meeting conducted via Webex

Attendance

Trustees

Frederick A. Laskey, Executive Director, MWRA
Matthew Romero, Executive Director, MWRA Advisory Board (Designee for Richard E. Raiche, MWRA Advisory Board)
Vandana Rao, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
Brigadier General William J. Meehan, North Worcester County Anglers and Quabbin Fishermen's Association

MWRA

Kathy Murtagh, Chief Operating Officer
Rebecca Weidman, Deputy Chief Operating Officer
Stephen Cullen, Deputy Chief Operating Officer
Carolyn Francisco-Murphy, General Counsel
Michael Altieri, Associate General Counsel, Environmental and Energy
Katie Ronan, Chief of Staff
Thomas Durkin, Director of Finance
Sean Navin, Director of Public Affairs
Stephen Estes-Smargiassi, Director of Planning & Sustainability
Michael Cole, Budget Director
James Coyne, Budget Manager
John Gregoire, Senior Program Manager, Reservoir Operations
Hillary Monahan, Project Manager, Environmental Permitting

MWRA Advisory Board

Bernadette Russo, Intern

DCR

John Scannell, Director, Division of Water Supply Protection
Dan Clark, Regional Director, Quabbin/Ware
Lisa Gustavsen, Deputy Regional Director, Quabbin/Ware
Kelley Freda, Regional Director, Wachusett/Sudbury
Joel Zimmerman, Watershed Planning Coordinator
Jarrett Sparks, Budget Director
Ken MacKenzie, Director, Natural Resources
Derek Liimatainen, Deputy Regional Director, Wachusett

WSCAC

Moussa Siri, Executive Director

The meeting was convened at 1:05pm.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Trustee Laskey welcomed attendees, introduced himself as the Chair and called the September 18, 2025 meeting of the Water Supply Protection Trust (WSPT) to order. It was noted that the meeting was being conducted via remote participation and would be recorded.

The Trustees, as well as several MWRA and DCR Division of Water Supply Protection (DWSP) staff, attended the virtual meeting via Webex. General Counsel Francisco-Murphy called the roll to establish attendance and a quorum. All Trustees were present.

There was discussion relating to DCR Ranger enforcement. Trustee Meehan noted the importance of requesting a written policy statement from EEA General Counsel regarding Ranger enforcement in the watershed and the need to provide clarification regarding the extent to which Rangers are able to issue citations and ask for identification. Trustee Romero expressed agreement and emphasized the need to address this ongoing issue. He explained that this request remains important and timely, further noting that while the Trust has received a number of verbal updates from General Counsel on the topic, the Trust has yet to receive a formal written policy statement. Discussion ensued regarding the Environmental Bond Bill and language that would clarify DCR Rangers under the purview of the Police Reform Act. Trustee Romero reiterated the importance of obtaining a written policy statement that would help to clarify specific provisions causing confusion to determine whether or not any future legislative remedy might be worth pursuing down the road.

Trustee Rao noted that DCR follows specific guidance pertaining to how the Rangers operate on all state parks and watershed lands. She expressed uncertainty regarding any additional material that could be provided to the Trust outside of the information that Mr. John Scannell, Director of DCR Division of Water Supply Protection (DWSP), has already presented at prior WSPT meetings. Trustee Meehan clarified, referring to 302 CMR 12.20 (5) *Parks and Recreation, Violations and Enforcement*. He expressed frustration that Rangers lack authority to ask an offender for identification. He urged the Trust to request that General Counsel issue a policy statement relative to Ranger ability to enforce regulations, specifically addressing the issue of Ranger authority in 302 CMR 12.20 (5) *Parks and Recreation, Violations and Enforcement* which allows Rangers to ask individuals for identification. Trustee Meehan read the following regulation aloud:

(5) If a DCR ranger or other authorized law enforcement official witnesses a violation of 302 CMR 11.00 or 302 CMR 12.00, such official may issue a citation to the offender. The DCR ranger or other authorized law enforcement official is authorized to request the name, address, driver's license or other photo identification, phone number and date of birth of the offender.

Mr. Scannell clarified that the aforementioned regulations are DCR's Park Regulations which do not apply within Water Supply. He expressed uncertainty regarding the referenced language and whether or not it remains in the current version of that regulation, based on recent policing

changes. Trustee Romero reiterated Trustee Meehan's request and concluded that a written opinion should be sent to the Trust to explain precisely what legal abilities Rangers hold. He requested that the Trust receive a statement in writing that clarifies provisions referenced in 302 CMR 12 and whether or not they are reflected in DWSP regulations. Trustee Romero noted that it would be helpful to know exactly what provisions within the Police Reform Act supersede and impact what the Rangers were able to do beforehand.

It was agreed upon that Trustee Rao would raise the issue once more to the General Counsel and report back at the next WSPT meeting. Trustee Meehan expressed concern that 302 CMR 12 may not apply to Watershed Rangers. He requested resolution that explicitly states 302 CMR 12 does not apply to Watershed Rangers.

Before returning to the scheduled agenda, Trustee Laskey stated that he has great respect for General Counsel and that he respects the opinion of Commonwealth attorneys, further noting that he does not wish to disrupt their ability to make these types of decisions. He also stated that while it could put the Trust in a good position to raise the issue to General Counsel once more, he clarified that it may be time to move on and pursue other solutions to this issue.

2. Approval of the Minutes

A motion was made by Trustee Heyes and seconded by Trustee Meehan to approve the June 4, 2025 WSPT meeting minutes. The Trustees unanimously voted to approve the minutes.

3. FY2025 End of Year Report

Mr. Scannell shared a presentation summarizing DWSP's Office of Watershed Management Fiscal Year 2025 and provided the following updates. Highlights include:

- Replacement of Quabbin Administration Building Windows using ARPA funds
 - Cutting and restoration along Quabbin Spillway
 - Completion of Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment (Phase 2)
 - Replacement of Clinton Garage Windows
 - Restoration of slope and area around Old Stone Church
 - Update of the Aquatic Invasive Species Management Plan
 - Virtual Forestry Dashboard for Commonwealth; Updated DWSP Forestry pages
 - Design of Quabbin Administration Building Hanger Door Replacement
 - Demolition of old Forestry Building on Blue Meadow Road
 - New Ramp at Boat Launch Area 3
- Land Acquisition: DWSP finished FY2025 with 114.2 acres protected.
 - 44.9 acres were permanently protected by fee purchase.
 - 70.3 acres were permanently protected using Watershed Preservation Restrictions (WPRs).
 - FY2025 Spending and Revenue
 - FY2025 Final Expenditures – Total FY2025 budget was 91% spent, at about \$22.5 million.
 - EE – Admin Expenses (117% expended); vehicle repair work that was done through Fleet Response out of the EE subsidiary versus what normally would have been an L.

- UU – IT Expenses, large charge-back at the end of the year.
- FY2025 Revenue – Total DWSP Revenue for FY2025 was about \$1,471,707. Collected 144% of estimate last year, majority from hydro & transmission.

Trustee Laskey noted that the report would be accepted and placed on file.

4. Certification of FY2025 Trust Expenditures

Mr. Scannell explained that the Trust must annually certify DWSP expenditures. Trustee Laskey requested a motion and a second to authorize him, as Chair, to sign the certification on behalf of the Trust.

Trustee Heyes made a motion, seconded by Trustee Rao, to approve the motion. General Counsel Francisco-Murphy called the roll and the motion was unanimously approved by the Trust.

5. FY2026 Workplan and Budget Review-

Mr. Scannell provided the following highlights of the FY2026 Workplan and Budget:

- New DCR Commissioner hired.
 - Easthampton Mayor Nicole LaChapelle began on July 21, 2025.
 - Continued work on Forests as Climate Solutions.
 - DEP annual inspection of system - water infrastructure and watersheds.
 - Scheduled for October into early November with DEP.
 - Next round of projects related to Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment:
 - Using EEA funding.
 - Will be used to help refine Assessment and identify potential concerns moving forward related to climate change.
 - Deer Hunts:
 - Hunts have been scheduled for the Fiscal Year.
 - Applications have gone out; lottery was just completed at Quabbin for two-day deer hunts in the park.
 - Expenditures:
 - Relatively light at this point in the year.
 - Quabbin Roof – getting ready to go out to bid, waiting for final sign-off from CAMM.
- Trustee Laskey noted that the FY2026 Workplan and Budget report would be accepted and placed on file.

6. Hiring Update

Mr. Scannell summarized DWSP’s ongoing hiring efforts. He explained that the Commonwealth is currently experiencing a hiring freeze. DWSP has lost a few positions over the last month, mostly due to retirements. Mr. Scannell noted five vacancies and is awaiting approvals to post those positions.

7. Miscellaneous Updates

● Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment

Mr. Ken MacKenzie, DWSP Director of Natural Resources, shared an update on the Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment.

- Mr. MacKenzie presented background on DCR’s Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment.

- Included all state parks and evaluated each watershed as a whole.
 - Information based on the climate change scenarios that were outlined in the 2023 ResilientMass Plan.
- Assessing Quabbin as one large asset was determined to not be a sufficient way to track climate change vulnerability.
- Mr. MacKenzie noted that DWSP's commitment to dive deeper into watershed vulnerability was largely guided by the Water Research Foundation's *Asset Management Framework for Forested and Natural Assets*.
 - Modeling and calculations based on economic frameworks for natural resources when they are providing a level of service.
- DWSP's Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment looks at each watershed at the sub-watershed scale.
 - Divided into smaller sub-basin scale and also by individual natural asset.
 - Public-facing document that discusses purpose and goals of Assessment.
 - Identifies natural assets and simple infrastructure:
 - Identified 66 different assets (forests, streams, wetlands)
 - Simple infrastructure including forested roads, culverts, and dams within the watershed.
 - Ranked 66 natural assets for criticality, narrowed down from 66 to 29 critical natural assets and divided into seven asset categories:
 1. Forest
 2. Open water
 3. Rivers and streams
 4. Wetlands
 5. Groundwater
 6. Soils
 7. Built infrastructure (stormwater basins, forested roads, etc.)
 - All seven categories were analyzed for the following three items:
 - Level of service if that natural asset were lost
 - Influence of a given natural asset on water quality
 - Level of climate change vulnerability as listed in the ResilientMass Plan
- Mr. MacKenzie explained the Assessment's data-intensive methodology:
 - Each natural asset was combined with an indicator measure and metric based on availability, sensitivity, contribution to the overall watershed protection criteria, measurability, and relevance.
 - Vulnerability score given for each sub-basin.
 - Main goal is to focus efforts –
 - Where management is needed
 - Capital investment
 - How to make sub-basins more resistant to a changing climate

- Four projects put out this year:
 - LiDAR forest data
 - Shoreline erosion factors at Quabbin
 - Historic ice conditions at Wachusett and Quabbin
 - Indicator using macroinvertebrates in stream

Trustee Heyes expressed his enthusiasm for the Assessment and noted that the climate change vulnerability tool has potential to set the Quabbin up to successfully support forest management. Trustee Laskey echoed that sentiment.

Trustee Rao emphasized the useful nature of the tool and raised the question of impacts on the watershed resulting from the identified climate changes, such as increased number of invasive species, increased disease, increased migrations from farther south, and the difference of species entering into MA. Mr. MacKenzie noted the difficult nature of measuring such impacts without concrete data to add into the tool, and that the Assessment has analyzed invasive species under current conditions. He further explained that the climate change vulnerability tool is adaptive and information will continue to be updated in the coming years. Trustee Rao recommended research into peer organizations across the country for reference on similar assessments to compare approaches.

Trustee Romero expressed enthusiasm for the Assessment and noted his excitement to see how the tool evolves over time.

- **Forestry Updates**

- Lots will be open for a 45-day period. Viewable on DWSP website with links to each project narrative and proposal.
- Total of 700 acres across watershed that will be managed this year.
- 96,000 acres of forested property.

Forests as Climate Solutions Initiative

- Forest Metrics Group considerations:
 - How to measure MA forests in ways that are meaningful to the public.
 - How to measure and compare forest reserves to regularly managed forests.
- Meeting with EEA at the end of the month to review in-concept draft reserve proposal for DCR acreage to be placed aside in reserves across all four watersheds.
 - Finding areas on DCR DWSP property where the forest has high integrity and does not need management.
 - Finding areas that have unique features and are adjacent to other conservation organizations, land trusts, and other state agencies.
 - Utilizing GIS layers and the internal knowledge of foresters for on-the-ground conditions in the watershed.
- Online Forest Dashboard is upcoming.

- Reviewing ways to expand reserves onto private lands.
 - Goal of 300,000 acres in reserves across the state, or 10% of the forested land in MA.
 - A certain percentage will fall to private land owners and municipalities, land trusts, and conservation organizations to achieve 300,000 acres in forest reserves.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Trustee Laskey. The motion was seconded by Trustee Rao. General Counsel Francisco-Murphy called the roll. **The Trustees unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 2:20pm.**