

Ware River Watershed Advisory Committee Meeting
Thursday, September 15th, 2016
7:02 PM

Location: Franklin Wood Studio, 232A Main Street, Rutland, MA 01543 (Behind Police/Fire Station)

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

Massachusetts Council of Sportsmen: Robert Carey, William Label

Alternate: Mike Moss

Worcester County League of Sportsmen: **John Root**

Alternate: Dave Papale

Trout Unlimited: **Jeffrey Schaaf (Co-Chairman)**

Alternate:

A Rod and Gun Club: Joe Cataldo

Alternate: Brian Waterman

Barre Selectboard: Martha Varnot

Alternate: **Edward Yaglou**

Hubbardston Selectboard: **Thomas Bratko**

Alternate:

Oakham Selectmen: **Thomas Hughes**

Alternate: Phillip Warbasse

Rutland Selectmen: **Charles R. Williams**

Alternate: **Brett Russ**

Barre Historical Society: **Margo Petracone**

Alternate: Peg Frost

Hubbardston Historical Society:

Alternate:

Oakham Historical Society: Wes Dwelly

Alternate: Bill Mucha

Rutland Historical Society: Helen Viner

Alternate: Tim Nahrwold

Massachusetts Wildlife Federation: Bill Westaway (Co-Chairman)

Alternate: Thomas Berube

Massachusetts Audubon Society: Martha Gach

Alternate:

Sierra Club: **Matt Hopkinson**

Alternate:

Upper Ware River Watershed Association: Donald Rich

Alternate: **Edward Yaglou**

General Public: Mark DuBois

Alternate: Dave Small

DCR Staff Present:

Herm Eck, Justin Gonsor, Lisa Gustavsen

Members of the Public Present:

Dean Zuppio

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Start Time: 7:02 PM

Approval of Minutes of Meeting on May 26th, 2016

Ed Yaglou made a motion to accept the minutes from the WRWAC meeting on May 26th, 2016. Matt Hopkinson seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Ware River Cleanup Day

The committee was unable to schedule a date in October for the Ware River Cleanup Day due to scheduling conflicts. They will wait until next spring to schedule the event due to scheduling concerns.

Forestry Proposals Update

Herm Eck updated the committee on the recent forestry proposals. The full, written proposals were posted online to the DCR website; no public comments have been submitted. The DCR commissioner signed off in support of the Barre-Heath proposal which calls for the creation of openings larger than 5 acres.

Ed Yaglou asked if DCR was able to complete all the brush mowing that they had wanted to get done. Herm Eck answered that this year, a few of the fields that were scheduled to be mowed have not gotten done yet, but most have been completed. Some of the fields are mowed on an every other year basis.

Skid Steer #2 Restoration Work

Lisa Gustavsen detailed the committee on how DCR was able to purchase a second skid steer to be used for habitat management. This new machine is larger than the previous model that was bought and should do a better job of maintaining right-of-ways and restoring fields; cost was just under \$113,000. It should be able to cut trees up to 6" in diameter. There are a few primary sites in the Ware River Watershed where the machine is set to be used at; the Barre Heath site, the Barre Falls Dam field, and Twin Hill. The committee was thanked for drafting a letter in support of purchasing the second skid steer.

Dick Williams asked if the Prison Camp fields got mowed. He was concerned about field encroachment and the preservation of historic sites. Herm Eck answered that not all fields got mowed, mainly due to equipment issues. The new skid steer could be used at this site in the future.

Tom Hughes asked about how often the machine will be shared across the state. Herm Eck answered that it should be open to other state agencies that ask/apply; no one has inquired yet.

Lisa Gustavsen talked about working maintenance of the machine into the DCR budget. There was discussion about how using the machine wisely and carefully can make parts last longer and lower maintenance costs over the years. There is 1 Ware River person on staff with the necessary licenses to operate the new machine.

Member Issues

Dick Williams brought up a press release about a \$14,000 upgrade to the Long Pond boat ramp. He was unsure if it was a planned upgrade, or if the upgrade had already happened. Herm Eck mentioned that the project is being funded and implemented by the Department of Fish and Game's Office of Fishing and Boating Access. Tom Bratko thought that the \$14,000 was allocated for 3 different boat ramps, but wasn't totally sure. The press release is attached at the end of these minutes.

Tom Hughes mentioned that there has been a lot of party activity along the back side of Long Pond this year, resulting in some broken glass and litter.

Tom Bratko asked about the status of Quabbin's water level. As of September 15th, Quabbin is 83.5% full, down about 9 ft. in elevation. Most seasons, water is taken into Quabbin from the Ware River in the spring. There was discussion about the decades old proposal to divert water from the Connecticut River to Quabbin that never ended up happening.

Dick Williams talked about his recent trip to Florida where he drove through a reserve that used automatic gates. He wondered if this type of system could be implemented at a spot like Comet Pond. DCR-MassParks, Central Region manages that location.

Matt Hopkinson mentioned that there will be construction happening at the Intervale Road Bridge and that it will be closed through next summer.

Ed Yaglou recently noticed that signage at intersection of Routes 122/148 had been cleaned up. Tom Hughes mentioned that the town is getting ready to pass a sign by-law.

Dean Zuppio saw a sign on Old Turnpike Road which reads, '4 + 4 only' but should actually read, '4 x 4 only'. Herm Eck mentioned that roads labeled '4x4 only' tend to have tough conditions for vehicles.

Dean Zuppio talked about a rumor he heard; that there were plans to reduce existing snowmobile trails in the Ware River Watershed going forward. Neither Herm Eck nor Lisa Gustavsen was aware of any such plans.

Jeff Schaaf mentioned that next year will be the 20th anniversary of WRWAC's first meeting. Their first meeting was held on December 11th, 1997.

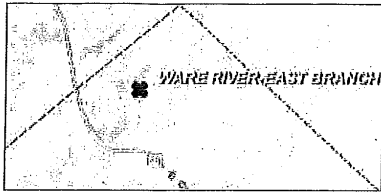
Matt Hopkinson made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Margo Petracone seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Meeting End Time: 8:05 PM

Upcoming WRWAC Meetings

- Thursday, November 17th, 2016 at 7 PM – Franklin Wood Studio, 232A Main Street, Rutland, MA 01543 (Behind Police/Fire Station)

Long Pond boat ramp gets \$14K facelift



The boat ramp located at Long Pond was one of a number of fishing and boating access projects recently completed by the state, aimed at increasing access for fishers and boaters across the Commonwealth.

The Department of Fish and Game's Office of Fishing and Boating Access (FBA) made \$14,000 worth of repairs to the boat ramp located in the Rutland State Forest. Managed by the Department of

Conservation and Recreation, the site has parking for 40 vehicles with trailers and provides good fishing for trout, largemouth bass, white perch and pickerel.

"Maintaining and improving access to our beautiful waterways continues to be a priority and these funds will be well used to increase access and hopefully encourage people who have not been to the area to put a boat, canoe or kayak in and enjoy all the area has to offer," said state Sen. Anne Gobi (D-Spencer).

The project was one of 11 access projects, totalling more than \$1.9 million, that Baker-Polito administration announced had been completed earlier this month. The projects included boat ramp and fishing pier renovations, parking lot improvements and a new dock.



The improvement made in Rutland was one of just two fiscal year 2016 projects in Central Massachusetts. The other was construction of a new car-top access site on Route 148, a \$100,000 project to provide access to the Quaboag River and Quaboag Pond. Other communities where projects were completed include Dracut, Gloucester, Methuen, Harwich, Scituate, Yarmouth, Easthampton and New Marlborough.

"These boating access improvements will greatly enhance boating and fishing opportunities and support our valuable tourist economy," said Gov. Charlie Baker. "It is our priority to ensure all Massachusetts' residents and visitors can enjoy the beauty and recreational

opportunities our public lands and waters provide."

"Proper maintenance of these facilities is of critical importance to the recreational boating and fishing communities," said Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito. "I would like to thank our many municipal partners who work with us to provide quality public access to Massachusetts waterways."

The FBA manages the construction, repair and operation of state boat ramps, canoe and car-top launch sites, sport fishing piers and shoreline fishing areas. The FBA oversees facility design and construction, which is usually done by private contractors.

"The Department of Fish and Game, through collaboration with local and private partners, works hard to ensure Massachusetts' residents and visitors have safe, reliable access to our many beautiful bodies of water," said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Matthew Beaton. "By increasing access to outdoor recreation, we hope to enhance the lives of citizens from every corner of Massachusetts and heighten appreciation for our natural resources."

"Access to rivers, lakes and coastal waters is a top priority for recreational boaters, fishermen, and hunters," said DFG Commissioner George Peterson. "The construction and maintenance of these facilities is a great investment in our recreational infrastructure."