

Quabbin Watershed Advisory Committee Meeting
March 13th, 2017
7:30 PM

Location: DCR Quabbin Visitor's Center, Belchertown, MA 01007

Members Present: Tom Barnes (North Worcester County Quabbin Anglers Association), Tom Berube (MA Council of Sportsmen), Elisa Campbell (Sierra Club), Craig Cortis (Worcester County League of Sportsmen), Jerry Eves (Trout Unlimited), Larry Gates (Quabbin Fisherman's Association), J.R. Greene (Friends of Quabbin, Inc.), Tom Lautzenheiser (MA Audubon Society)

DCR Staff Present: Justin Gonsor, Lisa Gustavsen, Helen Johnson, John Scannell

Public Attending: Rich Ambrozy, Rosemary Charron, Mike LaPrade, Brad Miner, Clayton Sydla, Lawrence Tucker, Heidi Waugh

Meeting Start Time: 7:28 PM

Approval of Minutes of Meeting on December 12th, 2016

Elisa Campbell noted two grammatical edits to be made to the minutes.

Tom Lautzenheiser made a motion to accept the minutes from the QWAC meeting held on December 12th, 2016 with edits. J.R. Greene seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Porcupine Ridge Runners – Quabbin Snowmobile Route Proposal Update

Helen Johnson updated the committee on the Porcupine Ridge Runners snowmobile route proposal. Since the last meeting she has walked different variations of the proposed trail with members of the Ridge Runners group. The northern section of the proposal runs along Hessian Lane, which is a DCR access road and has 3 culvert crossings on it. The southern section goes through DCR-DWSP property from North Main Street to Moosehorn Road, mostly on an old cart road that runs diagonally through the area. The middle section follows Moosehorn Road east about 900 feet, then turns northwest to follow a short DCR access road. It then continues north to get to a power line, sometimes following

old logging roads. This is the section where alternative routes were considered. The final version avoids an intermittent stream in the vicinity.

Elisa Campbell asked for clarification on the different types of roads mentioned in the proposal. Helen Johnson answered that Moosehorn Road is an unsalted dirt road west of Rt. 202. DCR access roads are dirt roads, usually behind locked gates. Cart roads are historic roads, usually narrower than DCR access roads. Old logging roads are places where a forwarder or skidder has run through the forest during a forestry operation; they are often full of regeneration.

Tom Berube asked about more information on the Moosehorn Road segment. Rich Ambrozy answered that it is a town road and that they would use it for roughly a quarter mile. The Ridge Runner's group hadn't officially gone to the town yet but they didn't anticipate them having a problem with it.

Elisa Campbell expressed concern over other user groups using the proposed route.

There was discussion whether or not ATV's could get around DCR's gates. There are three gates along the proposed route: one at the north end of Hessian Lane, one at the south end of Hessian Lane where it meets the power line, and one across from Hessian Land on the south side of the power line.

There was also discussion on how much clearing of old logging roads would need to be done for this proposal. Tom Lautzenheiser mentioned that the idea of expanding motorized vehicle use and permanently maintaining an open section of logging road has potential impacts. Tom Barnes also felt that opening up additional logging roads for a snowmobile trail would ultimately be abused by people using dirt bikes and ATV's.

Tom Berube asked Helen Johnson if she had any additional concerns regarding the proposal. She said that the most recent proposal successfully avoids the need for new stream crossings, but was also concerned about ATV's taking advantage of a newly maintained route.

Tom Barnes asked whose obligation it is to police unauthorized ATV usage in the summertime. He talked about the ATV use that happens during summer along Coldbrook Spring snowmobile trails. Rich Ambrozy mentioned that the Ridge

Runner's are open to putting up gates where necessary to help curb unauthorized ATV usage. J.R. Greene talked about seeing large rocks/boulders placed beside access gates to help prevent ATV's from going around gates. Craig Cortis mentioned that there will always be a certain percentage of the population that is not interested in following posted rules, no matter what. J.R. Greene suggested giving the group a trial period to see if their proposal can be successful.

Larry Tucker was also concerned about the potential abuses by other user groups. He cited examples in recent years where the Mill Valley Snowmobile Club has successfully worked with towns, state agencies, and landowners to prevent their snowmobile trails from being used by other unauthorized groups.

John Scannell noted that DCR-DWSP is not looking to expand public access on their property.

Tom Barnes made a motion to table discussion on the Porcupine Ridge Runner's snowmobile proposal and coordinate with town officials from Belchertown to determine how successful they have been in keeping ATV's off their snowmobile trails. Larry Gates seconded the motion. J.R. Green, Larry Gates, and Tom Barnes voted to support the motion. Elisa Campbell, Tom Lautzenheiser, Craig Cortis, Tom Berube, and Jerry Eves voted against the motion. The motion failed 5-3.

Tom Barnes made a motion to disapprove the Porcupine Ridge Runner's snowmobile proposal. Tom Lautzenheiser seconded the motion. Tom Barnes, Elisa Campbell, Tom Lautzenheiser, Craig Cortis, Tom Berube, and Jerry Eves voted to support the motion. J.R. Greene and Larry Gates voted against the motion. The motioned passed 6-2.

2017 Quabbin Fishing Season; Season Parking Passes; Boat Decontamination Program

Lisa Gustavsen updated the committee on the upcoming 2017 fishing season and boat decontamination program. The 2017 Quabbin fishing season is set to begin Saturday, April 15th (barring any late season ice cover) and end on Saturday October, 14th.

Boat Launch Area (BLA) season parking passes will go on sale at the visitor center starting Sunday, March 26th. They will also be sold at the 3 BLA's upon their

opening. Full price is \$50 and there is a reduced price of \$25 if you are aged 62+ or have a handicapped placard.

The Quabbin boat decontamination program will also continue this year. Reservations began being taken by the visitor center on March 1st. 13 dates are currently scheduled at the House of Wax in Orange, MA; \$45 is the charge. The 2017 Quabbin boat seal program schedule was handed out to committee members and is attached at the end of these minutes.

Mike LaPrade mentioned that he would like to see an additional decontamination date added in May just before Memorial Day, if possible.

Elisa Campbell asked if the low water level would affect canoe and kayak rentals. Lisa Gustavsen answered that barring any unforeseen circumstances, they will be available. There is a plan in place to purchase new, more durable canoes and kayaks that are in need of replacement.

Jim Budness has been promoted and is the new Quabbin BLA facility supervisor.

Jerry Eves asked about why there is no military discount at the BLA's. John Scannell answered that all rates are set legislatively, but that it is something we can look at in the future. Jerry Eves made a motion to that DCR consider offering a military discount in future years for BLA parking and boat rental fees. J.R. Greene seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

John Scannell mentioned that there will be new check-in forms at all three BLA's this year. All boat passenger's names, addresses, and emergency contacts will be collected on these new forms. The goal is the increase safety and security.

In the past, there have not been any consequences for damaging or leaving excessive litter in our rental boats. A new disclaimer is being put in our fishing guides and online that will alert people that they may be subject to damage charges or loss of their fishing privileges if they are found in violation of our policies. Larry Gates questioned how this policy would be implemented; how boat damage would be assessed. There was discussion on how this could be accomplished. Lisa Gustavsen mentioned that our BLA attendants start their

season on April 3rd and will be coordinating with Jim Budness to come up with an appropriate accountability system before the Quabbin fishing season begins.

Revised Watershed Protection Regulations

John Scannell gave the committee an update on the Watershed Protection Regulations. When Governor Baker took office, one of his directives was for all state agencies to complete a review of their regulations. That review was completed and presented at a public meeting. No changes made to the regulations; clarifications were made in a few places. Regulation 350 CMR 11 has been rescinded and replaced by Regulation 313 CMR 11; the only change being that any reference to the Metropolitan District Commission has been changed to the Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Member Issues

Tom Lautzenheiser stated that Mass Audubon has submitted another letter to the state Wildlife board in support of the Commonwealth's comprehensive rattlesnake conservation strategy. Elisa Campbell mentioned that the Sierra Club is also in support of the proposal.

Elisa Campbell is a representative on the DCR Stewardship Council and passed on her distress on the cuts to DCR's budget in general. The Council is considering publicly not supporting the budget for this year.

Larry Gates expressed his concern over the road conditions leading to the fishing areas, especially the gate 8 road. He felt the gate 8 road was graded better in past years and would like to see the issue addressed. He was also disappointed that the pot holes on the gate 43 road were not fixed until a week before the 2016 fishing season ended; the timing seemed inefficient.

Larry Gates also mentioned that he has been seeing people using electric bicycles inside the specified Quabbin gates where regular bicycles are allowed. He was looking for clarification on where electric bicycles are allowed and not allowed within Quabbin. Tom Barnes commented that he would like to see consideration given to people with a handicapped placard to use an electric bicycle on the roads inside Quabbin where regular bicycles are allowed.

Helen Johnson mentioned that FY18 Quabbin Forestry Lot proposals need to be approved by July 1st. Herm Eck will present those proposals at the next QWAC meeting. A public forestry tour of the proposed lots will be scheduled at that meeting as well.

Meeting End Time: 9:02 PM

Upcoming QWAC Meetings:

- Monday, June 5th, 2017 at 7:30 PM – DCR Quabbin Visitor Center, 485 Ware Road, Belchertown, MA 01007



2017 Quabbin Boat Seal Program Schedule

All private boats must have an intact Quabbin Boat Seal to launch on the Quabbin Reservoir. Seals can be obtained through a DCR approved decontamination process. Decontaminations and inspections will be held on the following dates in 2017.

You must call the Quabbin Visitors Center at (413) 323-7221 to make an appointment. Appointments will begin being taken on March 1st. Make sure you have your boat registration information when you call.

BOAT DECONTAMINATION

April

4/1/17 Saturday
4/5/17 Wednesday
4/12/17 Wednesday
4/13/17 Thursday
4/19/17 Wednesday

May

5/3/17 Wednesday
5/17/17 Wednesday

June

6/7/17 Wednesday
6/21/17 Wednesday

July

7/12/17 Wednesday

August

8/2/17 Wednesday
8/16/17 Wednesday

September

9/6/17 Wednesday

New dates may be added if appointment times on these scheduled dates are completely filled.

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS · EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

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