

**Ware River Watershed Advisory Committee Meeting**  
**Thursday, March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017**  
**7:00 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: **Robin Langer**

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, John Scannell

**Members of the Public Present:**

Douglas Bwylie, Bill Dobson, Mark Fautelix, Dennis Gubelski, Peter Johnson, Susan Johnson DiDato, Cindy Schlener, Eric Winer

**Meeting Minutes**

**Meeting Start Time: 7:02 PM**

**Approval of Minutes of Meeting on January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

Dick Williams made a motion to accept the minutes from the WRWAC meeting on January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2017. Donald Rich seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

**DCR's Earth Removal Issue in the Ware Watershed in Hubbardston**

Tom Bratko briefed the committee that in 2010 the Town of Hubbardston passed a Chapter 19 bylaw which states that anyone doing an earth removal project has to reclaim their products when they are done; this is for existing gravel pits without a permit. Through an internal investigation it was found that Hubbardston has 1,000 acres of open gravel pits. The town came across two DCR owned gravel pits. One of the pits is a 3.5 acre parcel acquired in the 1990's and an erosion issue was noticed; gravel seems to be washing into a brook located roughly 15 feet away. The town would like DCR to do something about this issue.

John Scannell stated that regarding the town's bylaw, the Commonwealth is not subject to any local bylaws. DCR will look into the erosion issue and get back the committee and the Town of Hubbardston before June 1<sup>st</sup>.

Tom Bratko also talked about a local bylaw in Hubbardston which states that contaminated dirt may not be placed inside the town.

**Quabbin Rattlesnake Proposal Working Group – Jan. 30<sup>th</sup> Meeting follow up – Dave Small**

Dave Small updated the committee on the status of the Rattlesnake Working group. There have been two meetings so far, the first held in Athol and the second in Belchertown. These meetings were basically the working group doing their job in the view of the public. Public comments were not taken at these meetings but comments can be submitted online to MassWildlife. Discussions have been about the status of rattlesnakes in the state and a presentation was given by a state herpetologist.

Their next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday March 22<sup>nd</sup> at 6:30PM at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 126 Main Street, Ware, MA. At that meeting members of the public will be allowed to make statements to the working group and have their comments entered into the record.

After the series of meetings the working group will deliberate and present their findings to the MassWildlife Board, who will make final recommendations.

**Quabbin Fishing Season 2017 and Boat Decontamination Program**

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

Boat Launch Area (BLA) season parking passes will go on sale at the visitor center starting Sunday, March 26<sup>th</sup>. 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 1<sup>st</sup>. 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.

The boat decontamination program was put in place to prevent the spread of invasive plants. The decontamination process includes using high temperature water to flush the motor and spray down the boat and trailer. Carpeting is not allowed anywhere on the trailer to go through this program.

There is also a free program called the cold weather quarantine that is done in November and December in New Salem and Belchertown. Carpeting is allowed on the trailer when going through this program. Appointments are made for the cold weather quarantine starting in October through the Quabbin visitor center.

Canoes and kayaks are not allowed on the reservoir. Canoes and kayaks are rented at fishing areas 2 and 3 but they are strictly for launching in the regulating ponds off the reservoir. Private canoes and kayaks are not allowed.

Dick Williams asked if any educational outreach would be done at Long Pond or other bodies of water this year. Herm Eck mentioned that Paula Packard would be conducting said outreach, but wasn't aware of her specific schedule.

There was discussion on when Quabbin is allowed to take in water from the Ware River Watershed. Herm Eck answered that diverting from Ware River is allowed from October through June, and that the water temperature must be below 40°F.

### **Updated 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.

Dick Williams asked if a copy of the updated regulations is available. John Scannell answered that there is a 1-page summary that can be disseminated to committee members.

## **Member Issues**

A Hubbardston resident contacted Tom Bratko about some DCR land north of Rt. 62. There is a baffle/beaver dam that appears to be falling apart and becoming a problem. Tom was unclear whether it is on state highway or DCR land. Herm Eck will look into the issue.

Helen Viner mentioned that she has been in contact with Ellen Berkland, the state archaeologist for DCR. The problem with the Prison Camp Cemetery is that there are no markers so the exact parameters on where graves are located is unknown. Ellen suggested Helen contact Topographix, a company out of Hudson, NH to come down and survey the cemetery. It would cost roughly \$1,850 a day for the company to run their ground penetrating radar at the cemetery; they can cover a half acre of land in a day. John Scannell mentioned the possibility of local historical societies working with DCR on a partnership grant to fund the project. There was discussion of possibly fencing off the area in the meantime.

Bill Mucha mentioned that the retirement party for Bill Pula is currently scheduled for April 5<sup>th</sup> at 6PM at the Barre Mill Restaurant in Barre, MA. There is a chance that it will need to be rescheduled.

There was a question about seeing a group of workers last September/October near shaft 8; what type of work were they doing. Herm Eck answered that every year the water gets drawn down so that the grates can be cleaned. More recently, weed removal has been conducted as well.

Dick Williams asked if there are any upcoming public forestry tours planned. Herm Eck answered that FY18 Ware River Forestry Project proposals would be presented at the next meeting; a date for a public tour would also be determined at that meeting.

The Barre Heath Forestry Operation was discussed; 17 acres have been harvested. The DCR Fire Crew has visited the site and made a few recommendations to the burn plan for the site. The goal is to sell another 20 acres of pine in the lot in June. It is unclear when the burning aspect of the plan will happen. Dave Celino, head of the DCR fire crew, would like to attend a WRWAC meeting in the future to explain the process to the committee and answer any questions they may have; he has a busy schedule. Ed Yaglou suggested that DCR put out a press release

explaining the rationale and philosophy behind this forestry operation as it is very visible from Rt. 62 and many people seem to have questions about it.

A member of a local horseback riding group expressed concern about recent T-trail closures in the Ware River Watershed within the past year or so. T3 and T6 have been closed with no timeframe for the closing to be lifted. Herm Eck mentioned that T3 had been closed due to erosion issues. There was also discussion of illegal trails branching off of T3 that contributed to the closing.

T5 is set to be closed due to an upcoming forestry operation in the vicinity. The group also took issue with signage in the watershed linking horses with cryptosporidium and giardia, and would like to see those signs taken down; they feel the science does not support the link.

A member of the public mentioned that there are local horse communities in the area that would be happy to work with DCR to improve and fix damaged trails.

Concern was expressed over the low attendance records at meetings from some WRWAC members in the recent past.

Tom Bratko talked about hearing reports of watershed rangers giving incorrect information to people while out in the field on trail usage. He felt all rangers should have up to date maps and information regarding public access. Increased enforcement during evening hours in the watershed was also encouraged.

The T6 trail was discussed. T6 was listed on the 2000 Public Access Plan but seems to have disappeared on the 2010 version. Margo Petracone mentioned that all of the 9 T-trails were originally approved in 1998. The trail network is set to be addressed the next time the Ware River Watershed Public Access Plan is updated. That process is scheduled to begin later this year; public input will be taken at that time as well.

Jeff Schaaf requested that DCR produce a map of previously authorized trails (T-trails) that are currently closed to horseback riding, and a description as to why they are closed and when they might be reopened, to be sent to the committee before the next meeting. The committee would also like to know which trails have been closed in general, not just for horseback riding. He would also like

committee members to be sent a copy of the most up to date map of horse trails in the Ware River Watershed.

There was discussion as to why the Central Mass Rail Trail is closed to horseback riding. Before improvements were made to the trail, horseback riding was allowed.

**Meeting End Time: 8:28 PM**

**Upcoming WRWAC Meetings**

- Thursday, May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at 7 PM – Barre Old Town Hall, Barre, MA 01005



## 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 1<sup>st</sup>. 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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