



MASSWILDLIFE

## DIVISION OF FISHERIES & WILDLIFE

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Jack Buckley, *Director*

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
DIVISION OF FISHERIES & WILDLIFE  
BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Present: Dr. Joseph Larson/Chair, Michael Roche/Vice Chair, Bonnie Booth/Secretary, Ernest Foster, Stephen Sears, Dr. Brandi Van Roo, Ronald Amidon/Commissioner/DFG, Mary-Lee King/Deputy Commissioner, Jack Buckley/Director, Mark Tisa/Deputy Director, Kris McCarthy/Associate Director/Finance and Administration, Todd Richards/Assistant Director/Fisheries, Michael Huguenin/Assistant Director/Operations/Acting Assistant Director/Wildlife, Craig MacDonnell/Chief/Wildlife Lands, Marion Larson/Assistant Director/Public Affairs, Susan McCarthy/Wildlife Biologist, Anne Gagnon/Northeast Land Agent/DFG, Captain Tony Kabir/OLE; Public: Paula Terrasi, Marion Stoddard, Leslie Gabrilski, Dave Morin, Jennifer Pettit, Laura Hagen.

Date: September 19, 2017

Location: The Lawrence Library  
15 Main Street, Pepperell, Massachusetts

Chair Larson opened the September meeting at 11:10 A.M., and welcomed the attendees to the meeting. He explained the agenda, noting that the public hearing scheduled for 1:00 P.M. might interrupt the meeting, in which case the Board would go out of session for the hearing and then come back into session to finish its agenda.

### Acceptance of Minutes

After the Chair noted that the August draft minutes had not been received by the Board for review, a motion was made by Secretary Booth to table the minutes from the August Fisheries and Wildlife Board meeting until the October meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Foster; the motion passed unanimously.

### Chair's Comments

Chair Larson reported that he had attended the Big MOE – the Massachusetts Outdoor Exposition – for the first time the previous weekend, and had found it very impressive, with thousands of adults and children exploring dozens of activities all over the grounds of the Hamilton Rod and Gun Club.

### Commissioner's Comments

Commissioner Amidon agreed that the Big MOE was a great event, with 47 stations of activities. He reported that he had held a meeting with Deputy Commissioner King and five of the county leagues, and that the topics had included sharing tips from the leagues that are doing well with leagues that are struggling to retain members. The Commissioner also reported that he had been able to allocate \$275,000 from the capital repairs account to contribute to the Kents Island Bridge repair, which will reopen 37 acres to the public.

The Commissioner also reported that he had made a site visit to Birch Hill, and that he was having a map created to show the areas of early-successional restoration and also of Pine Barrens restoration. He reported that the legislative hearings held at the FHQ went very well, stating that about 60 people interested in sportsmen's issues had attended and noting that both the Commissioner and the Director had commented on Sunday hunting, beavers, crossbows, and different kinds of ammunition.

### Director's Comments

Director Buckley reported that he would be traveling to meetings in September and October.

The Director reported that MassWildlife staff were published in the September *Wilson Journal of Ornithology*: "Hooded Mergansers Use Nest Boxes Designed for Wood Ducks: A Changing Demographic," coauthored by H

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Heusmann and Jason Stolarski, and “Why are Numbers of Mallards Declining in the Northeastern United States? The Possible Role of Reduction in Winter Feeding Sites,” authored by H Heusmann, examines the hypothesis that reduced feeding of ducks may be contributing to mallard population declines.

Director Buckley also reported that fall trout stocking would start on the following Monday, September 25, with 60,000 fish going out in the fall stocking. He also reported that the 17-pound brown trout taken in August in the Swift River was a big hit on Facebook with a reach of 90,000; 1,300 likes; 660 shares; and more than 175 comments as of the morning of the meeting. The Director also reported that Northern Pike had also been stocked in Massachusetts, nearly 2,000 of them, thanks to the efforts of Dan Marchant and Karl Zukauskas of the Palmer Hatchery and Ken Simmons and Caleb Slater. That post was also very popular on Facebook, reaching 50,000 people, receiving nearly 600 likes, shared over 315 times, and eliciting more than 75 comments. Director Buckley stated that this story was used for the agency’s first-ever Instagram post, and MassWildlife now has a live Instagram account.

The Director issued a reminder that on October 4, 2017, would be the Francis Sargent Award ceremony for retired Commissioner of Fish and Game George Peterson at 1:30 P.M., in the large conference room in the Cronin Building, with a light reception hosted by the Mass. Outdoor Heritage Foundation. He also reported that on the past Saturday the Worcester County Beekeepers had held a beekeeping event in the Cronin Building. He said that it was a very good event, with lots of new people, a good crowd. Director Buckley reported that Governor Baker had visited the building for an EEA Climate change event. The Director had had to be away at the time, but had been told that the event went very well and that the Governor was very impressed with the Cronin Building. Another recent event was the graduation of the 2017 Mass. Junior Conservation Camp, which is always a nice day.

Director Buckley reported that Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is back, gaining a lot of national attention. The findings indicate that prions persist in the soil and can infiltrate crops, and that primates can contract CWD, from a brand-new study on monkeys. The Director stated that he wanted to bring it to the Board’s attention because this is an issue of growing interest nationally and staff will be watching it closely.

Chair Larson stated that he had brought a local representative [State Representative Solomon Goldstein-Rose] to the McLaughlin Hatchery and that the representative was very impressed; the operation is almost zero-net energy, with no need to pump water. He stated that they had also visited the Conn. Valley District office as well.

Vice Chair Roche asked Deputy Director Tisa to create a presentation about the McLaughlin story at some point; detailing the impacts of the new pipeline, with data to show efficiency gains. He stated that he thought it would also be a great magazine article, Facebook post, etc.

### Old Business

#### *USFWS Refuge Issues*

Director Buckley reported that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) continues in discussion with Dr. Schlüter, Mr. Zimmer, and Mr. Huguenin, and the discussion is at a point when they need to put something in writing. Director Zinke has issued statements to say that the USFWS and other agencies believe that the public should have more access to refuges, but even more important to the Director are the MESA issues. Currently talking about protecting candidate listings; in Mass, those are our listed species.

#### *Status of Regulations*

##### *1. Dogs on WMAs*

Director Buckley reported that the proposed dog regulation is still in Administration and Finance, so he had nothing new top report.

#### *Draft Invasive Species Policy (Jack Buckley)*

Director Buckley reported that Dr. Regosin now has some comments from Dr. Van Roo and is working on responses to those.

*Bird-banders Meeting Update (Jack Buckley)*

The Director reported that State Ornithologist Vitz sent invitation to banders this week, still trying to set up a first meeting.

*Staff-Board Working Group Update (Jack Buckley)*

Dr. Van Roo reported that she and the other members are waiting to hear from staff, and Deputy Director Tisa reported that staff is working on a report to be given to the Board, perhaps in November or December.

New Business*The Human Dimensions of Suburban Deer Management in Eastern Massachusetts (Susan McCarthy)*

Wildlife Biologist Susan McCarthy presented a detailed report to the meeting on her Master's work entitled, "Assessing Hunter Values, Expectations, and Satisfaction Regarding Controlled White-tailed Deer Hunts in Suburban Eastern Massachusetts." Ms. McCarthy introduced herself as a wildlife biologist in the Wildlife section where she assists the project leaders with field work, data entry and analysis, public engagement and communication, and a number of other duties. In 2014, she was given the opportunity to work towards a Master's degree by joining the USGS Cooperative Research Unit at UMass/Amherst. The Coop Unit provided her the opportunity to earn her degree by conducting research on behalf of the agency and while working full time. As a result, her research hasn't been like that of a traditional graduate student, particularly in the sense that the timeline toward her degree is longer.

Ms. McCarthy provided a brief introduction to the natural history and management challenges of deer in suburban Massachusetts, noting that deer did not start making it back into densely populated eastern Massachusetts until the last 20 years. She reported that when they did start to make their way into these areas, there was a perfect storm of factors to allow population growth, and that this is what has led to the issues that we face today in many areas of eastern Massachusetts. She also detailed the objectives of her study, which centers on the Blue Hills controlled hunt; set out the methods she is following and her rationale for them; and discussed some of the management implications of her research. After only 2 years of data collection and analysis, she reported that she had no results to report at this time.

After some questions and discussion with the Board, Chair Larson thanked Ms. McCarthy for her informative presentation and stated that the Board looked forward to hearing more about it in the coming years.

*Northeast Wildlife District Activities (Patricia Huckery)*

Northeast Wildlife District Manager Pat Huckery reviewed the seasonal work and activities in her district by introducing and discussing in detail the work of each of her staff members. She provided numerous examples of staff work with habitat, surveys and research, state-listed species, public outreach, and stewardship.

Chair Larson and the other Board members thanked her for her very informative presentation.

Law Enforcement Comments

There was no representative present from the Office of Law Enforcement, so the Chair explained that the meeting would come back to this agenda item if a representative joined the meeting later.

Chair Larson introduced the members of the Board, in case anyone had any questions for Board members from different parts of the state.

It being close to 1:00 P.M., Vice Chair Roche moved that the Board recess for 5 minutes and return to session after the public hearing; Mr. Foster seconded; the vote in favor was unanimous.

After the Hearing Officer closed the hearing, the meeting resumed.

Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Advisory Committee Report (Dr. Joseph Larson)

Chair Larson reported that the Advisory Committee met on September 14. He stated that most of the meeting addressed the review of state-listed species, which has not been possible to conduct properly for over 5 years due to pending lawsuits. The time is approaching when the agency will have to start this process again, determining whether any species' listing status needed to be changed. He reported informally that the discussion included 8 or 9 that may be delisted; 2 or 3 that may change; and 3 or 4 that may be newly listed. Chair Larson also reported that there is a process to add any federal ESA-listed species automatically to the state list, and this process was also discussed. Chair Larson also outlined the current process for reevaluating the state list.

A brief discussion ensued, during which Director Buckley pointed out that it's in the state statute that any federally listed species is automatically on the state list, so no further action is required.

Confirm October Meeting Date

Members confirmed that the October meeting would be held on October 24, 2017, at 11:00 A.M. It was decided that the meeting will be held at the Royalston Rod and Gun Club. Vice Chair Roche reported that the Army Corps of Engineers at the Birch Hill (Royalston) Dam could provide a tour of the dam as a field trip. Vice Chair Roche moved that the meeting be so scheduled; Dr. Van Roo seconded; the vote in favor was unanimous.

Members' Comments

Mr. Sears reported that he had the opportunity to visit the Frances Crane WMA after the last meeting's SEWD presentation. He stated that this property is very impressive and a poster child for the value of management for early-successional habitats. He also reported that MassWildlife's Sandwich Hatchery is on the cover of the summer issue of Edible Cape Cod, and he provided a copy to photocopy for the Board members. Mr. Sears also reported that, at a recent Berkshire County League meeting, the members had evinced interest in getting more information on the progress of Chronic Wasting Disease because Berkshire County is adjacent to New York, so there is a lot of interest in the status. He had also had a question from the League about the numbers of ADPs available – very few. He closed his remarks by thanking Ms. Huckery and Paula Terrasi from the Town of Pepperell for the very interesting tour of the dam removal site earlier in the day.

Mr. Foster and Mr. Winthrop reported no comment.

Dr. Van Roo reported that she had the opportunity to attend the Ruffed Grouse Society's Grouse School, which included a Q&A with MassWildlife Upland Game Biologist Dave Scarpitti, who gave an excellent presentation, both inside and outside his areas of expertise. She reported that she thought Mr. Scarpitti was a perfect example of a consummate professional who represented the agency extremely well.

Vice Chair Roche reported he's excited to welcome October again, and offered his congratulations to the Berkshire Natural Resources Council on its recent anniversary.

Secretary Booth also thanked staff for the tour of the [Millie Turner] dam removal site and stated that she was very excited for the future there.

There being no further business, Chair Larson reported that the Board had to go into executive session for the purpose of discussing proposed land acquisitions whose negotiations would be compromised by discussion in open session. Secretary Booth moved to go into executive session and not return to regular session but to adjourn thereafter; Dr. Van Roo seconded the motion; the vote in favor was unanimous. The meeting was adjourned at 1:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Bonnie Booth  
Secretary

List of documents presented to the Board at the September meeting

September Agenda

Spreadsheet of Natural Heritage Fund Taxpayer Donations (1992 to 2017)

Documentation for the Executive Session

Documentation for the public hearing