

**Ware River Watershed Advisory Committee Meeting**  
**Thursday, March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018**  
**7:00 PM**

**Location:** Rutland Free Public Library, 280 Main Street, Rutland, MA 01543

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

Massachusetts Council of Sportsmen: William Lebel

Alternate: Mike Moss

Worcester County League of Sportsmen's Clubs: John Root

Alternate: Dave Papale

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

Alternate:

A Rod and Gun Club: Joe Cataldo

Alternate: Bryan 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:

Hubbardston Historical Society: **Robin Langer**

Alternate:

Oakham Historical Society: **Bill Mucha**

Alternate: **Lee Dougan**

Rutland Historical Society: **Helen Viner**

Alternate:

Massachusetts Wildlife Federation: (group disbanded)

Alternate:

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, John Scannell

**Members of the Public Present:**

Mark Fauteux, Denise Kellicker, Rich Konde, Paul Kreswick, Michael Priffi, Cindy Schlener, Douglas Walther, Marianne Wojcicki, Dean Zuppio

**Meeting Minutes**

**Meeting Start Time: 7:08 PM**

**Approval of Minutes of Meeting on January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

Donald Rich made a motion to accept the minutes from the Ware River Watershed Advisory Committee (WRWAC) meeting on January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018. Ed Yaglou seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

**Discussion of potential changes to legislature regarding the ware river watershed advisory committee**

The committee discussed potential new groups to join and be represented on the WRWAC going forward. The Massachusetts Wildlife Federation recently disbanded leaving 16 groups on the committee, some of which have members who have rarely attended meetings in the recent past. Brett Russ and Margo Petracone both expressed interest in adding new user groups to be represented on the committee.

It was noted that there are currently four groups on the committee who represent hunting/fishing interests (Massachusetts Council of Sportsmen, Worcester County League of Sportsmen's Clubs, Trout Unlimited, and a Rod and Gun Club). A member of the public suggested consolidating those four groups into a single hunting/fishing representative on the committee. The historical societies and town select boards from each of the four towns (Barre, Rutland, Oakham, and Hubbardston) are represented on the committee. Helen Viner

noted that it may be difficult to consolidate/remove groups that have been on the committee since its inception.

The user groups discussed to be added to the committee were bicyclists, snowmobilers, cross country skiers, equestrians, and a representative from Wachusett Greenways. Margo talked about two of the equestrian groups in the area: the Barre Riding and Driving Club and the Central Mass Trail Riders Association. The goal would be to have those two groups get together and nominate one primary member and one alternate member to the committee if the legislation gets successfully updated.

It was recommended that the new legislation allow for a representative of an equestrian group located in the town of Barre, Hubbardston, Oakham, or Rutland. Similar wording was suggested for the snowmobile groups in the area: to allow for a representative of a Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts (SAM) affiliated snowmobile club. The proposed wording for bicycling groups was to allow for a representative of a New England Mountain Bike Association (NEMBA) affiliated bicycling group.

The committee discussed the potential problems associated with adding too many groups to the committee. One example given would be the trouble of consistently reaching a quorum. John Scannell noted that members are generally not on the committee for a single purpose and also listen to public concerns from the people who attend these meetings. As a group, WRWAC advises DCR and should be listening to general public concerns.

Quorum rules for the committee were discussed. Jeff Schaaf stated that 50% of the filled seats/groups need to be in attendance to have a quorum; currently that number is 8. Brett Russ suggested adding some sort of attendance requirement for WRWAC members to the legislation to motivate them to show up for meetings. The committee discussed adding wording to the legislation that representative groups on the committee be required to attend a minimum of 3 meetings per calendar year. It was unclear what the repercussions would be for not meeting the attendance requirement.

Committee members talked about how often they communicate with the group they represent on the committee. Members should be briefing and passing on

meeting minutes and agendas to their representative group before/after WRWAC meetings. If a primary member cannot attend a meeting they should be making sure their alternate does. It was suggested that the organizations represented on the committee be contacted to discuss the attendance of their representatives at meetings. These organizations should also be notified that the committee is currently considering changing/rewriting the WRWAC legislation.

A member of the public asked where meeting notices are posted. Meeting agendas and approved minutes can be found on the state website at <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/ware-river-watershed-advisory-committee-wrwac>. It was suggested that agendas get posted on the town websites for Barre, Rutland, Oakham, and Hubbardston; Justin Gonsor will follow up on this.

It was determined that the committee will need to revise their legislation and then pass it on to Anne Gobi to present it to the senate. Any new groups added to the committee would nominate a primary and alternate member to then be approved by DCR. The goal would be to get new representation on the committee while not greatly expanding membership; groups that haven't been participating could potentially be dropped and new groups that will be more involved could be added. Dropping the now defunct Massachusetts Wildlife Federation and adding an equestrian, snowmobiling, and bicycling group would leave the committee being represented by 19 groups.

### **Potential spring ware river cleanup day**

The committee scheduled a spring clean up day for Saturday, April 28<sup>th</sup> at 9AM. Everyone should meet at the DCR Oakham Field Office located at 578 Old Turnpike Road, Oakham, MA 01068.

John Scannell noted that the date will line up with DCR's larger Park Serve Day which gives residents the opportunity to volunteer at DCR properties across the state to help parks prepare for the upcoming summer recreation season. DCR will help organize trash bags, water, and snacks for the day as well as publicizing the event on their website. Past clean up days have resulted in 3-4 truck loads worth of trash being removed from the watershed.

### **Member Issues**

John Scannell talked about the upcoming WRWAC meeting scheduled for April 12<sup>th</sup> that will focus on trails in the watershed. The plan is to get large maps printed and displayed so that people can identify problem areas and get on the same page regarding where trails are located and who is allowed to use them. DCR would like to approach the meeting from a more broad perspective about where we allow access and where we don't. Currently, public access is heavily focused closest to the intake and there is less public access in the more remote parts of the watershed. Therefore, DCR would like to simultaneously look at areas where recreation should be reduced as well as pinpoint where there are opportunities to allow increased access in other places. A goal of the new public access plan is to address the fact that the more sensitive areas in the watershed currently allow the most public access. Meeting with individual user groups to identify problem areas plus areas for access opportunities will be a part of this process.

A member of the public commented that they would like to see new trails opened before others are closed.

A member of the public wanted to be sure DCR is thinking about providing adequate parking (horse trailers need a lot of space) at trailheads and allowing equestrian riders to use the new bridges that are set to be installed in the Ware River. A second member of the public also asked DCR to consider allowing non-motorized usage over those bridges.

Helen Viner updated the committee on the status of the prison camp. DCR carpenters have made crosses; the Rutland Historical Society has paid for the wood. They will be placed at the cemetery sometime in May before Memorial Day. Herm Eck is working on coming up with materials to construct a small fence around parts of the property.

**Meeting End Time: 8:34 PM**

#### **Upcoming WRWAC Meetings**

- Thursday, April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at 7 PM – Rutland Free Public Library (downstairs), 280 Main Street, Rutland, MA 01543
- Thursday, May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at 7 PM – Rutland Free Public Library (downstairs), 280 Main Street, Rutland, MA 01543