



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/DFG, Jack Buckley/Director, Mark Tisa/Deputy Director, Todd Richards/Assistant Director/Fisheries, Michael Huguenin/ Assistant Director/Wildlife/Acting Assistant Director/Operations, Craig MacDonnell/Chief/Wildlife Lands, Marion Larson/ Assistant Director/Public Affairs, Captain Tony Kabir/OLE; Public: Jim Wallace, Gene Chague, Brian Majewski, Fred A. Sears, Russ Sears, Mark Jester.

Date: August 22, 2017

Location: The Stationery Factory
63 Flansburg Avenue, Dalton, Massachusetts

Chair Larson opened the June meeting at 1:10 P.M. Mr. Sears welcomed the Board, staff, and public present to the Stationery Factory, and offered a brief history of the building and some of the current uses and planned renovations, as well as some of his own work for conservation in the greater Dalton area over the years.

Acceptance of Minutes

A motion was made by Secretary Booth to approve corrections to the minutes from the June Fisheries and Wildlife Board meeting that had been emailed to the Board members for review. The motion was seconded by Mr. Foster; the motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Van Roo then offered corrections to her remarks on the Bird-banders at the July meeting. A motion was made by Secretary Booth to approve the minutes from the July Fisheries and Wildlife Board meeting as amended. The motion was seconded by Mr. Foster; the motion passed unanimously.

Chair's Comments

Chair Larson reported that he had participated in events sponsored by Tanglewood and MassAudubon called Birds and Music that featured some music based on birdsong. He was struck by Wayne Peterson's talk to a large audience contrasting how birds make sounds and how humans produce sounds. The talk shifted to something the Chair said he thought very important, and that was the creation of grasslands as habitat for birds that need huge expanses of these habitats. Mr. Peterson went on to say that MassAudubon had two areas of grasslands separated by a beautiful stand of white pine. There had been a long discussion within MassAudubon, and eventually the organization decided to remove the pines. Mr. Peterson had stated that some members were upset about the cutting, but he felt they had done the right thing to create enough of this habitat to benefit these species. Chair Larson stated that this was a very promising sign that MassAudubon was starting to come around to the benefits of habitat restoration.

Chair Larson reported that he had taken an opportunity to stop in at the Western District Office to pick up a map of the Darey WMA. He then went to lunch with staff and asked about the old District building, so the staff took him on a tour to show him the changes that had been made. He asked Director Buckley about the possible closure of Otis AFB and the ramifications for our habitat work there. Director Buckley stated he would talk to Chief of Regulatory Review Schlüter and District Manager Zimmer and report back, but that basically there should be no change to our ability to continue to manage the areas we control.

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Commissioner's Comments

Commissioner Amidon reported that the Secretary's office has informed him that progress is being made on the proposed biomass fuels regulations, and stated that these regulations could be a help to our habitat-restoration efforts by providing additional markets and uses for the wood that is removed from management areas.

The Commissioner also reported that he is working to secure an additional \$275,000 from capital funds for MassWildlife's project to renovate the Kents Island Bridge to improve access to Kents Island [on the Parker River in Newbury], a 47-acre island with excellent habitat.

Commissioner Amidon reported that he was organizing a meeting the following month to formulate a written plan for Birch Hill involving Board members and staff. He also reported that he had called a meeting with all the leagues to discuss what's going right for active, vibrant leagues and what's going wrong for leagues that are struggling.

Director's Comments

Director Buckley reported that a public hearing is scheduled for the next meeting on the proposed corrections for the WMZ boundary descriptions. He also stated that Mike Nelson had recently taken a short walk in the butterfly or pollinator garden in back of the Cronin Building and reported that he saw 10 species of butterflies in under 10 minutes, including Black Swallowtail, Spicebush Swallowtail, Cabbage White, Orange Sulphur, and Monarch. The Director noted that the soil-stabilizing rye is still dominant, but some of the wildflowers included in the seed mix are starting to appear, including Common Milkweed, Partridge Pea, and New York Ironweed.

Director Buckley reported that he would be travelling to Jackson Hole at the end of August for an AFWA retreat with the director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and to Salt Lake City in mid-September for the annual meeting of the AFWA.

The Director reported that he had met habitat biologists Ben Mazzei and Chris Connors at Hopkinton State Forest when they returned after fighting fires with DCR and New Hampshire firefighters in Canada. He reported that they fought with New Zealand, Mexican, and Australian crews, and suggested to them that they do a presentation at a Board meeting in the near future. Coincidentally, Director Buckley also reported that on the previous Friday the MassWildlife fire crew did its first controlled burn under the new Fire Policy, at Southwick WMA, and that Dr. Van Roo had participated. The burn went very well, and the crew found the policy very helpful.

The Director reported that the Joint Committee on Natural Resources would be holding one of its hearings in the Cronin Building on September 18. He also announced an informational meeting cosponsored by OLE with chiefs of police from the Cape to the North Shore who are or will soon be dealing with bears in their communities. This meeting was planned in the Cronin Building on Thursday, September 28.

The staff Employee Conference was being held the following Friday at the Herm Covey WMA; the Director noted that the Board was welcome to attend. And he also reported that the Director was a victim of fake news the previous Friday, when a Facebook post that was clearly faked purported to be an article in the Worcester T&G saying that the Director had declared all the Antlerless Deer Permits null and void. This of course was not true, and the post had been taken down within a few hours.

Old Business

USFWS Refuge Issues

Director Buckley reported that Dr. Schlüter, Mr. Zimmer, and Assistant Director of Wildlife Huguenin had met with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) staff and that MassWildlife staff will be putting something in writing and then seeing if the USFWS will sign it. It is especially important that the USFWS comply with MassWildlife's Regulatory Review of work in endangered-species habitat, the Director said.

*Status of Regulations**1. Dogs on WMAs*

Director Buckley reported that the proposed dog regulation is still in Administration and Finance (ANF); there was nothing new to report.

Draft Invasive Species Policy (Jack Buckley)

Director Buckley reported that staff was awaiting notes from Dr. Van Roo on a suggested rewrite of the original proposed draft.

Bird-banders Meeting Update (Jack Buckley)

The Director reported that State Ornithologist Drew Vitz had sent an invitation and was hoping to set a date for a meeting.

Staff-Board Working Group Update (Jack Buckley)

The Director had nothing new to report.

New Business*Personnel Report (Mark Tisa)***New Hires**

<u>Employee</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Location</u>
Rebecca Gendreau	Endangered Species Review Assistant Office Support Specialist II	Westborough

Vice Chair Roche moved; Mr. Foster seconded; the vote in favor was unanimous.

Fletcher Clark	Habitat Biologist Game Biologist III	Westborough
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Secretary Booth moved; Dr. Van Roo seconded; comment: Roche; vote was unanimous.

Patrick Conlon	Private Lands Habitat Biologist Scientist (Contracted)	Westborough
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Secretary Booth moved; Mr. Foster; vote was unanimous.

Director Buckley reported that a grant from NRCS is in the works to combine with the Secretary's grant money to get almost \$1 million in funds to support private landowners doing habitat management, hence the importance of this contract position.

Transfer

Michael Huguenin	Assistant Director of Wildlife Research Manager VI	Westborough
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Secretary Booth moved; Mr. Sears seconded. The vote was unanimous in favor.

Deer Hunting Expectations in Suburbia (Susan McCarthy)

It became apparent that the Town of Dalton had lost power during the course of the meeting. Given the importance of the photos and graphics in the presentations, Dr. Van Roo moved to delay both presentations, hoping the power would be restored before the end of the meeting; Vice Chair Roche seconded; the vote in favor was unanimous.

Law Enforcement Comments

Captain Tony Kabir reported that there had been two boating fatalities since the last Board meeting and two serious injuries. Western District Manager Madden reported on a human-bear encounter in New Marlborough when a bear was discovered raiding peach trees by the property owner, who received very minor injuries, a scrape. The formal assessment was that this was not an attack but rather an attempt to bluff and scare. No invocation of the large-animal protocol was needed because the contact was very minor.

Captain Kabir also related the details of an escaped bull situation in Littleton, where OLE officers responded to assist the town as officers always do when asked, but the OLE is not responsible for sedating large domestic animals, despite the media and public perception of the situation, and the drugs used have not been tested for human consumption, so it's always an issue when to use or on what species, especially since the bull was slated to be slaughtered. Eventually the bull was euthanized by the town, as was properly its decision. Captain Kabir stated that the party is making the case that the state is responsible for restitution, but that the owner had let it loose initially.

After a brief discussion, the Board members decided that they would like to hear Mr. Madden's activities report even though he was still without power for his projector.

Western Wildlife District Activities (Andrew Madden)

Western Wildlife District Manager Andrew Madden reported on an array of activities his staff performs through the summer and fall, including that his staff had participated in the bear-collaring project, and for the first time doing both the trapping and the collaring. He had originally hoped for two females; had 16 captures and six sows. Of the six sows, they lost 2, so we now have four in the Western District. He stated that he and his staff learned a lot in the course of the work, and they found it easy to catch bears, usually within 24 hours of putting the barrel trap out. He added that his staff also has photos and saw a number of large +400-pound animals. He also reported that his staff was busy with stewardship activities, was grateful for the increased capacity brought by the Stewardship positions, and was managing properties more actively, including to improve the primitive, rural parking areas. He also reported that boundary marking was also an important priority the staff was working through.

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

Chair Larson reported that the Advisory Committee does not meet in August.

Confirm September Meeting Date

Members confirmed that the September meeting would be held on September 19, 2017, at 11:00 A.M. Director Buckley stated that at the Board's request the meeting will be held in the Lawrence Library, Pepperell, and a hearing would be held at 1:00 P.M.

After some discussion, the Board members suggested October 24, 2017, 11:00 A.M., at the Westborough FHQ, as the October Board meeting date.

Members' Comments

Mr. Foster asked when the Blue Hills public meeting was happening following day, and reported that he wanted to make sure the attendees were aware.

Mr. Sears reported that he has told the Berkshire Natural Resources Council (BNRC) about the Wildlands Trust building where the Board had its July meeting, and about the fact of having that building being transformative for the organization. But Mr. Sears stated that he also wanted to make sure that communication was open between MassWildlife and the BNRC. Mr. Sears stated that he wasn't sure how much awareness there is that the BNRC is on the same side of the issues that concern MassWildlife, but sportsmen don't know it; nor does the environmental side know how aligned BNRC is with sportsmen.

Secretary Booth and Vice Chair Roche reported no comments.

Dr. Van Roo reported on the Southwick WMA burn; that she was very impressed with staff, and that safety was the Number 1 consideration; that staff did a wonderful job of going by the book; and that our staff worked very well together all day.

Assistant Director Huguenin briefly introduced Wildlife Biologist Susan McCarthy, the staff member whose presentation was delayed until the September Board meeting because of the power outage, which was still ongoing.

There being no further business, Secretary Booth moved to adjourn; Dr. Van Roo seconded the motion; the vote in favor was unanimous. The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Bonnie Booth
Secretary

List of documents presented to the Board at the August meeting

August Agenda

Draft July meeting minutes for review

August Personnel Report

Copies of MassWildlife's brochure, "2017-2018 Migratory Game Bird Regulations"

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