



MASSWILDLIFE

DIVISION OF FISHERIES & WILDLIFE

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COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
DIVISION OF FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE
FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE BOARD
MEETING MINUTES

PRESENT: Dr. Joseph Larson/Chair, Michael Roche/Vice Chair, Bonnie Booth/Secretary, Ernest W. Foster IV, Stephen Sears, Dr. Brandi Van Roo, Ron Amidon/Commissioner/DFG, Mary-Lee King/Deputy Commissioner/DFG, Mark Tisa/Director, Jon Regosin/Deputy Director, Kris McCarthy/Associate Director/Finance and Administration, Tom French/Assistant Director/NHESP, Michael Huguenin/Assistant Director/Wildlife, Trina Moruzzi/Assistant Director/Operations, Todd Richards/Assistant Director/Fisheries, Marion Larson/Chief/Information and Education, Elizabeth Wroblicka/Chief/Wildlife Lands, Nicole McSweeney/Outreach and Marketing, David Stainbrook/Deer & Moose Project Leader, David Paulson/Senior Endangered Species Biologist, Major David Loos/OLE; PUBLIC: Dave Morin, Richard Wall Jr., Jim Wallace, Stan Andriski, Mariah Place, Paul G. Beaulieu

DATE: January 10, 2019

LOCATION: Division of Fisheries and Wildlife Field Headquarters
Westborough, Massachusetts

Chair Larson opened the January meeting of the Fisheries and Wildlife Board at 10:05 a.m.

Acceptance of Minutes

A motion was made by Secretary Booth to accept the minutes from the December meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Dr. Van Roo. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair's Comments

Chair Larson welcomed the meeting. He expressed his appreciation for the memorial service for former Chair Gige Darey that was held the previous Saturday. He thought it was very moving and a wonderful tribute to Mr. Darey's life and conservation legacy.

Commissioner's Comments

Commissioner Amidon reported that he has been meeting with DFG's directors and others in the divisions to develop the goals and priorities for the department for the coming four years. He also reported a meeting with the Office of Fishing and Boating Access's Director Shepherd, Assistant Director Cameron, and DCR Commissioner Roy regarding partnering to create new boat ramps on the Charles and the Merrimack. The Commissioner stated that MassWildlife's dog leashing regulations are being publicized; he noted that the rollout is going well, with a lot of good feedback from sportsmen and other users of the WMAs. He also reported that the DER's Osgood Brook dam removal project has been prioritized by the EEA, and that DER staff is working with the Commissioner and MassWildlife Director Tisa and Assistant Director for Fisheries Todd Richards on the logistics of the project.

The Commissioner also handed out a document labelled Birch Hill Outdoor Experience Partnership. He reported that the project is moving forward after years of work by Commissioner Amidon and Board Vice Chair Roche. The partnership continues to get attention, thanks in part to large forestry projects conducted by Habitat Project Leader Scanlon to improve habitat at Birch Hill. Most recently, EEA has

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approved a meeting with DCR to discussion that agency’s possible involvement with the project. The Commissioner stated that he would keep the Board informed on further developments.

Director’s Comments

Director Tisa reported an exciting year ahead with lots of challenges, and stated that he was very confident in the continuing professional development of the new managers and other new staff.

The Director stated that the final draft of the Invasive Species guidance document had been distributed to the members of the Board before the meeting via email, and he asked for a vote to adopt the draft, with any minor edits or modifications the Board members might submit. He thanked Dr. Van Roo for her contributions over the time the document has been under development. Dr. Van Roo moved that the Board adopt the proposed “Guidelines for Invasive Species Assessment and Mitigation”; Mr. Foster seconded the motion. Discussion: Chair Larson commented that he had a number of small edits to submit and he provided staff with a printed copy that contained his edits. He also stated that the document and all similar documents going forward should add a statement of the date of adoption by the Fisheries and Wildlife Board on the cover. When there was no further discussion, the vote in favor of adoption was unanimous.

Law Enforcement Comments

Major David Loos reported the year-end summaries of the OLE’s calls for service in 2018. Statistics the Major thought would be of interest to the Board included 139 calls to assist Fisheries and Wildlife, 428 bear calls, 45 coyote calls, 303 deer calls, 1,524 hunting complaints, 56 Moose calls, 250 raptor calls, 68 ATV accidents with 9 fatalities, 118 motorboat accidents with 12 fatalities, and 5 snowmobile accidents with no fatalities reported.

He also reported that the OLE is participating in the Springfield Sportsmen’s Show again this year at the Big E Fairgrounds, noting that it is a great opportunity to meet, discuss issues with, and answer questions for sportsmen and the general public that attends the show.

Personnel Report (Kris McCarthy)

Associate Director of Administration Kris McCarthy submitted the following personnel report for the Board’s consideration and vote:

Promotion

<u>Employee</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Location</u>
Michael T. Jones	State Herpetologist Conservation Biologist IV	Westborough

Mr. Foster moved acceptance of the report, Dr. Van Roo seconded the motion; the vote in favor was unanimous.

Linking Landscapes for Massachusetts Wildlife (David Paulson)

Senior Endangered Species Review Biologist David Paulson reported that, in December 2008, the Mass Department of Transportation (MassDOT) and MassWildlife established what it was originally a 3-year interdepartmental service agreement whose purpose was to streamline the regulatory review process pursuant to the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act. The MassDOT also had an ambitious Accelerated Bridge Program, with 250 structurally deficient bridges it wanted to repair over 8 years. After a very successful initial partnership, the program was renewed in December 2011 and continues to the present with MassDOT funding the Linking Landscapes program.

Mr. Paulson stated that the MESA regulatory benefits of the partnership include early project coordination/collaboration between the agencies, predictability of work flows for both agencies, and the development of creative and holistic solutions in projects that benefit both fish/wildlife/rare species populations, and transportation infrastructure. He reported on numerous examples of collaborative projects, including plant- and wildlife-friendly slope stabilization next to roads, stream crossings designed for fish and wildlife passage as well as severe storm resilience, and an extended example of a retaining wall redesign.

He also reported many non-regulatory benefits, including the ability to develop proactive programs for road ecology research, rare species protection, wildlife-vehicle collision reduction, long-term ecological planning, and roadside habitat restoration and management. Linking Landscapes for Massachusetts Wildlife

The Chair thanked Mr. Paulson for his work and his very interesting report.

Break

After the brief break, Chair Larson reported that Mr. Foster, Secretary Booth, Vice Chair Roche have formed a subcommittee working with the Director and his staff on the agency fiscal analysis being conducted now and in the coming months.

Massachusetts: Chronic Wasting Disease Update (David Stainbrook)

Deer and Moose Project Leader David Stainbrook reported that Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is an infectious disease that is 100% fatal to cervids (members of the deer family). He stated that it is believed to be caused by prions, which are a form of folded proteins that are extremely stable and can exist on the landscape for over 10 years. The CWD prion causes neurological damage that continues to progress until the animal dies. The incubation period can be more than 18 months, during which the animal is not showing any symptoms but spreading infectious material. He also reported that deer will typically die within a few months once symptoms, which include “wasting” emaciation, abnormal behavior, drooping head and ears, loss of bodily functions, drooling, etc., appear.

Mr. Stainbrook stressed the following important points, that CWD has not been detected in Massachusetts and that we have strong regulations in place to reduce the risks, noting that, since regulations adopted in 2005, no live deer can be brought into the state and there is a carcass ban from CWD-positive areas. He also stressed that Massachusetts has had no documented cases of CWD in humans or livestock. In states with CWD, there is evidence of decreased hunter interest and corresponding loss of license sales, as well as deer population decreases in areas with an incidence rate greater than 20%.

Mr. Stainbrook also reviewed the history of funding of CWD research, the places where CWD is found, the spread of the disease over time, recent research, steps to reduce the risks to Massachusetts deer, and the outreach efforts that are being undertaken in Massachusetts to publicize the issue and educate hunters. In summary, he reiterated that CWD has not been detected in Massachusetts, that we are prepared with a CWD Response Plan, and that we still take targeted samples for CWD given available funds. For future steps, Mr. Stainbrook stated that we will continue to monitor the research and risks and work with other experts to determine the best next steps, and that we will continue to communicate with the public and our hunters, keep an updated website, and work with law enforcement.

After a brief discussion, the Board thanked Mr. Stainbrook for his enlightening presentation.

Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Advisory Committee Report

Dr. Larson had reported on the January Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Advisory Committee meeting during his Chairman's Comments and he had nothing further to add.

Confirm Meeting Date

Members confirmed the February Fisheries and Wildlife Board meeting on February 21, 2019, and Mr. Sears moved that the meeting be rescheduled to 1:00 p.m.; Vice Chair Roche seconded the motion; the vote in favor was unanimous.

Member's Comments

Dr. Van Roo, Vice Chair Roche, Mr. Sears, and Secretary Booth reported no comment.

Mr. Foster thanked Chief Larson for her team's efforts to get the word out on the management areas about the leashing requirements; he's already seeing compliance and signage at multiple locations.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Roche to move into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing certain land acquisitions and to not return to open session. The motion was seconded by Mr. Foster. The motion passed unanimously.

Executive Session

Chief of Wildlife Lands Wroblicka presented six proposed acquisitions, which were each reviewed and all unanimously approved by the Board.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bonnie Booth
Secretary

List of documents presented to the Board in its December meeting packets

January Agenda

Draft December meeting minutes for review

Personnel Report

"Birch Hill Outdoor Experience Partnership" document (Department of Fish and Game)

"Linking Landscapes for Massachusetts Wildlife" 1-page Handout

"Linking Landscapes for Massachusetts Wildlife: 2010-2017 Road Mortality Summary Report" (January 2018; Revised March 2018)

Eighth Biennial Northeastern Transportation & Wildlife Conference Final Program; "Partnering for Resilient Infrastructure and Ecosystems"

Spreadsheet of Natural Heritage Fund Taxpayer Donations (1992 to 2018)

Table of 2018 NHESP Direct Donations

Documentation for the executive session