



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, Ken Simmons/Chief/Hatcheries, Jason Zimmer/Southeast Wildlife District Manager, Joe Rogers/Conn. Valley Wildlife District Manager, Todd Olanyk/Central Wildlife District Manager, Emily Stolarski/ Communications Specialist, Elaine Brewer/Outreach Specialist/NHESP, Adam Kautza/Coldwater Fishery Resource Project Leader, Jason Stolarski/Watershed Project Leader, Capt. Robert Forsythe/OLE; PUBLIC: Dave Morin, Wendy Larson, Jennifer Pederson, Bill Patuszek, Michael Vito, Chris Jackson, Stan Andriski, William Anderson, Jim Wallace, Elizabeth Magner

DATE: November 20, 2018

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

Chair Larson opened the November meeting of the Fisheries and Wildlife Board at 10:10. He introduced Michael Vito of the Deerfield Chapter of Trout Unlimited and other TU representatives present, noting that the Deerfield and Greater Boston TU chapters contributed, along with others, to a raft for surveying larger rivers that would be reported upon later in the meeting.

Acceptance of Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Foster to accept the minutes from the October meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sears. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair's Comments

Chair Larson reported that he was in the South for the previous two weeks, and that the drive back was delayed to avoid slippery conditions. He also reported that nationwide there are trends to developing alternative funding for state fisheries and wildlife agencies, and he noted that these were prompted by the downward trend of P-R funds from the USFWS, including from the sales of firearms and ammunition.

Vice Chair Roche stated that it has been a dynamic situation for a long time, and that he has been looking at it nationally and locally for years. Reporting that he had been talking to Steve Williams of WMI and looking at MassWildlife budgets, he stated that he wants to encourage Director and staff to continue to work on the budget and explore ways to increase or redirect funding going forward.

The Chair stated that he wants the Director to do what he needs to do to research and get a handle on the agency budget, and then bring it to a subcommittee of the Board.

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Commissioner's Comments

Commissioner Amidon reported attending a Commissioners' meeting in the EEA Secretary's office. He stated that Secretary Beaton highlighted that there are several departments that have a high level of expertise that the Governor doesn't share. The Commissioner stated that this included the Department and MassWildlife, and the message was to keep doing what staff has been doing and keep up the good work. Commissioner Amidon also reported attending a Cranberry Task Force meeting. This is an interagency group formed by the Governor to work on areas identified in a task force report where the state can assist cranberry growers with issues like possible hybrid strains, succession of bogs and farms, and exit strategies for older growers looking to transition to retirement.

The Commissioner also reported that he was working on issues around the Freetown Bioreserve, including addressing calls from the Barnstable County League and some legislators to open and improve access to the area for hunting. He noted that many parking areas are as far as a mile from good hunting grounds, so he is trying to remedy that, including through adjustments to the gating system. Commissioner Amidon also reported that the Mass. Conservation Alliance, a group of sportsmen, was meeting in the FHQ the following week, and that he was hoping the Secretary would be attending as well.

Director's Comments

Director Tisa stated that he wanted to focus his comments mostly on MassWildlife staff. He said he was very excited about the development of his staff, and, in particular, the relatively young management team that is coming together very well. He noted that there have been big changes over the past several years and that the managers are working hard together to adapt the agency to the changes. He reminded the Board that MassWildlife had undergone a reorganization previously, which is now coming to fruition with much of the management staff in place.

At the national level, Director Tisa reported that a number of staff are doing excellent work and contributing to solutions to large, systemic issues. Associate Director and CFO Kris McCarthy is working on the AFWA Fish and Wildlife Trust Funds committee, the Hunting and Shooting Sports Committee, is the vice chair of the Fish and Boating Committee, and has just been appointed to the national R3 committee. R3 State Coordinator Astrid Huseby is also the staff for the R3 Committee, and Marketing Specialist Nicole McSweeney is traveling to the RBFF [Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation] state marketing workshop along with the Director and the Associate Director/CFO, and had just been invited to present on Massachusetts' cutting-edge work on marketing fishing licenses. The Director also reported that Michael Huguenin (NEAFWA Wildlife Administrators), Todd Richards (Vice Chair, NEAFWA Fisheries Administrators), Rebecca Quiñones (NEAFWA Climate Change Committee), and Jon Regosin (Vice Chair, NEAFWA Wildlife Diversity Conservation and Funding Committee) are all very active and in leadership positions in their respective regional technical committees.

Director Tisa quickly reviewed his busy travel schedule for the coming month. He reported that he would be attending the Sportsmen's Caucus in New Hampshire, participating in a panel discussion on state and regional R3 efforts. He was also planning to participate in the RBFF state marketing workshop in Atlanta, and then the following week he would be traveling back to Atlanta for the Joint Task Force on Federal Aid meeting. Director Tisa reported that he is now the treasurer of the NEAFWA [Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies], which automatically puts him on the executive committee of that organization.

The Director also specially commended Federal Aid Coordinator Michael Sawyers, who is doing excellent work as the chair of the staff Working Group for the Trust Funds Committee.

Secretary Booth responded with a brief report on the Committee Hearing on Public Works and Environment, which she was able to listen to streaming live on the matter of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act and the Modernizing the Pittman-Robertson Fund for Tomorrow's Needs Act, for which the Board had written letters of support in March and for which the Chair had sent a follow-up letter earlier in November. She felt the evidence presentation during the hearing was very well done and that the issue is in good hands.

Law Enforcement Comments

Captain Robert Forsythe reported that people may see OLE officers in the field with facial hair. He stated that Command had relaxed the facial grooming requirements to allow beards, and that this is a fundraising event, called the No Shave November Campaign, which supports the Veterans Home Base Program.

The Captain reported a few statistics from the updated OLE reported call list (since the first of the year): 400 reported wildlife-related calls for service, with 200 raptor calls; 116 boat accidents, 11 fatal (including 2 divers), median age 48; and 60 OHV accidents, 6 fatal, 1 minor (14 years old), 1 woman (99% of the time, it's men), median age 28.

Captain Forsythe confirmed that MassWildlife's new dog leashing regulations are in effect on January 11, 2019, and reported that they have been distributed to all officers.

On the personnel front, the Captain reported that OLE is conducting background investigations with the intention of hiring 10-11 new officers soon; their training in the police academy will follow. Officers are also preparing for the 2018 Shotgun Deer hunting season, which began on November 25, 2018. He also reported that on December 7, 2018, the following officers will be the recipients of the 2018 Commonwealth Citation for Outstanding Performance Team: Lieutenants Robert Akin and Matt Bass, Sergeants Eric Baldwin and Sergeant Michael Powers, and Officers Scott Opie, Andrew Pierce and Colin Haynes. These officers receive this award for their exceptional work conducting NASBLA accredited courses for maritime partners as well as for their leadership qualities.

Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Advisory Committee Report

Because of computer technical problems in the meeting, Dr. Larson switched the agenda items and gave the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Advisory Committee Report first. He reported that he had not attended the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Advisory Committee's November meeting because he was out of state.

Trout Fisheries Management (Adam Kautza)

Coldwater Fisheries Project Leader Dr. Adam Kautza reported on the status of wild trout in Massachusetts and provided some specific updates of management and research projects. He provided summaries of key wild trout metrics, including abundance and size structure; displayed maps of wild trout distributions; and discussed and illustrated 'prime' wild trout fisheries across the state. Dr. Kautza also provided extended analyses of projects in which Field Headquarters staff collaborates with District staff and others, including on surveys to determine carrying capacity and movement of stocked Rainbow Trout in the Swift and natural reproduction of Brown Trout in the Deerfield.

Dr. Kautza explained that the Deerfield Brown Trout research sought to answer whether wild reproduction of Brown Trout is contributing to the fishery and to what degree, and he detailed the work being done by Trout Unlimited chapters to identify and monitor redds [breeding structures that trout and salmon build to lay their eggs], in which the volunteers found evidence of reproduction and issues with dewatered redds and eggs due to the flow regimes from the upstream power station.

He also described a raft donation project that was a collaboration among MassWildlife staff; the Deerfield and Greater Boston Trout Unlimited chapters; the MA/RI Council of Trout Unlimited; and Jim Dowd, who donated the outfitter-style 12-foot raft, and Don Barnes, whose company reconfigured the existing raft frame to accommodate the sampling equipment, including a small generator. Dr. Kautza reported that staff used the raft initially for doing electrofishing surveys to studying trout population dynamics on the upper Deerfield River. The raft will be used for similar studies on other large coldwater rivers throughout Western Mass. Dr. Kautza explained that such a raft is necessary to effectively survey large, relatively shallow and swift rivers. Staff cannot efficiently cover enough area with backpack electrofishing and MassWildlife's lake/pond electrofishing boat would run aground immediately.

In the brief discussion that followed, Mr. Vito was asked to report and he stated that he and his colleagues saw what they thought was a lot of spawning activity in the Deerfield. During their surveys they found 105 trout redds in 17 miles of river, 38 with viable eggs. The volunteers also found enough egg-fry trout to show that the eggs were viable. Dr. Kautza explained that he got proof through analysis that the fry are Brown Trout fry, from the same redd and even the same parents, so the agency has evidence for the relicensing process to show that the Brown Trout fishery is viable and should be taken into account.

Board Elections (Bonnie Booth)

At this time, Chair Larson asked for a motion to turn the meeting over to the Secretary for the purpose of holding the annual election of officers. Mr. Sears so moved; Mr. Foster seconded the motion; and the vote in favor was unanimous.

Secretary Booth called for nominations for **Chair**. Mr. Sears nominated Joseph Larson; Dr. Van Roo seconded. Secretary Booth asked if there were any other nominations. Hearing no more nominations, the Secretary asked for a motion to close the nominations. Mr. Sears so moved; Mr. Foster seconded the motion; the vote to close the nominations for Chair was unanimous. The vote for Joseph Larson for Chair was unanimous.

Secretary Booth opened the nominations for **Vice Chair**. Mr. Foster nominated Michael Roche; Dr. Van Roo seconded. Secretary Booth asked if there were any other nominations. Hearing no more nominations, the Secretary asked for a motion to close the nominations. Mr. Foster so moved; Mr. Sears seconded the motion; the vote to close the nominations for Vice Chair was unanimous. The vote for Michael Roche for Vice Chair was unanimous.

Secretary Booth opened the elections for **Secretary**. Mr. Roche nominated Bonnie Booth; Dr. Larson seconded. Secretary Booth asked if there were any other nominations. Hearing no more nominations, Mr. Roche moved to close the nominations; Dr. Larson seconded; the vote to close the nominations for Secretary was unanimous. The vote for Bonnie Booth for Secretary was unanimous.

Secretary Booth returned the meeting to the Chair.

Confirm Meeting Date

Members confirmed the date of the December meeting on December 20, 2018, 10:00 a.m.

After much discussion, the Board also changed the January meeting to Thursday, January 10, 2019, with a 10:00 a.m. start.

Member's Comments

Mr. Sears reported that he's been asked by an individual in the Berkshire County League to ask if Massachusetts would ever issue an annual license as a year-to-date license from the date of purchase. Mr. Foster asked that small game licenses also be considered in that. Mr. Sears reported that there are

also complaints that people get no ADPs [Antlerless Deer Permits] for 10-year periods or more, and requests for a rotating system of some sort. He reported that he was brought to an interesting meeting with Green Berkshires, the Friends of Smiley's (AKA Mill) Pond, Tom Tynning (from Berkshire Community College), and others with concerns about turtle migration and road impacts. He also thanked David Stainbrook for giving an excellent CWD report to the Berkshire County League, and suggested it would be interesting for the Board to see as well.

Secretary Booth reported that the North Brookfield Sportsmen's Club was set to be a check station for biological deer check. She also thanked the Central Wildlife District Manager for agreeing to pass on his District Report to all the sportsmen's clubs in the League.

Vice Chair Roche reported no comment.

Dr. Van Roo reported that nine of her students had been accepted as volunteers for deer check stations during biological week, and she offered many thanks to Mr. Stainbrook and other staff for giving them first-hand experience in that effort.

Mr. Foster reported questions about and interest in the progress of the development of proposed changes to the turkey regulations. He also asked about preliminary results of the Southeast District Bowhunting season. He stated that he was glad to hear Capt. Forsythe mention that the dog-leash regulations will go into effect in January and that the issue is on the EPOs' radar. Mr. Foster stated that he wanted to affirm again that access to the Freetown Bioreserve for hunting is a big issue in that area. And he also reported that he went out fishing on the Deerfield River for first time the previous June and was thoroughly impressed; he is looking forward to fishing it again. He closed his comments by reporting that he has been checked twice this deer season by EPOs who were professional and made him feel at ease, and that the interactions were great experiences. He is glad to see that the officers are still getting out there even though the OLE is short-handed.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Mr. Foster to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Dr. Van Roo. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bonnie Booth
Secretary

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

November Agenda

Draft October meeting minutes for review

Email from Joseph Larson to Susan Sacco, "FW: Wendell forest editorial," November 14, 2018

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