



**WATER SUPPLY CITIZENS
ADVISORY COMMITTEE**
to the Mass. Water Resources Authority

485 Ware Road
Belchertown MA 01007
(413) 213-0454
fax: (413) 213-0537
email: info@wscac.org

WSCAC Meeting

January 8th, 2013 at 10:00 a.m.

Location: MWRA Facilities in Southborough

Members in Bold in Attendance:

Whitney Beals, WSCAC Chair, NE Forestry

Andrea Donlon, CRWC-via phone

Gerald Eves, Trout Unlimited

Michael Baram, BU & CFL

Kimberly Noake MacPhee, FRCOG

Dona Motts, MA League of Women Voters

Martin Pillsbury, MAPC

Alice Clemente, Blackstone River Watershed

Jeanne Richardson, Boston Water & Sewer

Paul Lauenstein, NepRWA

Nancy Bryant, SUASCO

Martha Morgan, Nashua River Watershed

Mason Phelps, Millers River Watershed

Non-Members in Attendance:

Bill Fadden, Wild & Scenic Rivers

Steve Estes-Smargiassi, MWRA

Lexi Dewey and Sue Costa-WSCAC staff

The majority of the meeting was dedicated to reviewing and refining WSCAC's initial draft response to the STAC report. Final comments will be sent to the DCR Commissioner Lambert and Sec. Sullivan. WSCAC members had been emailed the staff's draft letter and returned their comments to the office. Staff integrated the majority of the comments and, as per Open Meeting Law, brought the new draft to the open meeting for discussion.

The main areas of discussion included the following:

- The positive and negative reviews on what the STAC report did and did not cover, what was their mission and did they fulfill it?
- A definition of what Quabbin is: Public infrastructure, not a national/state forest. The primary objective is maintaining water quality. Does the forest management program help meet the goals of retaining unfiltered public water supply status? What works, what could be better? Should the program be restarted?
- Dividing WSCAC comments into 3 categories: those we want addressed before restart of the forestry program, those we want addressed in the next Land Mgmt. Plan, and comments on the pros and cons of FSC recertification which WSCAC favors.
- The importance of outreach, scheduled pre-and post-harvest visits, promoting the larger interest of education so the public understands what is required to have a healthy, diverse and resilient forest that protects water quality. The lack of good information and questionable/negative implementation brought about the moratorium.
- The importance of treating invasive plants before logging occurs to encourage regeneration and stop non-native plants from spreading.
- The use of commercial language which focuses on board foot value is not helpful in the type of watershed forestry done at Quabbin. Using a different yardstick to discuss the forestry program would be helpful. What works best for resiliency and diversity to address potential natural disturbances? Generating revenue is not the goal.

The following members noted additional concerns:

- Andrea-Not enough biodiversity and resilience options covered in the report besides irregular shelterwood. More information/solutions for addressing invasive plants needed in the report.
- Michael-The importance of public outreach and better language/yardsticks for discussing the focus on diversity and resilience.
- Jerry-More information needed on the culvert program which can be found in the Land Mgmt. Plan.
- Paul-The importance of dealing with invasive species before logging operations.
- Whit-The importance of defining regeneration, and adding resilience to diversity of species. What is the end goal for species diversity? The various roles of some invasive plants including wildlife habitat and erosion control. The purpose of the STAC report was to review the principles of DWSP's forest management program as it relates to the Commonwealth's investment and payback of not having to build a filtration plant.
- Steve-Structural comments on how the WSCAC comments can address specific issues of concern identify actions and summarize what the committee would like the Commissioner to do. Anything done in the short and long term must ensure water quality. Answer the question of should the program be restarted and what WSCAC sees as critical to a successful restart.

Lexi will integrate the above feedback and send a second draft to the Executive Committee for review.

The STAC report and public comments will be reviewed by Commissioner Lambert and Sec. Sullivan. DCR will respond to the report via a public presentation in Barre.

Steve Estes Smargiassi-Highlights on Water methodology and Wastewater Metering

Steve talked briefly about the Advisory Board's Operations Committee discussion on the status of wastewater metering and revisiting MWRA's water rate methodology.

The MWRA is looking at the metering of wastewater to see what has changed over time. A small flow isn't metered because it is too expensive. The cost of assessing any change will be low if staff can do the work over time. If time is an issue, a consultant can do the work quickly.

The MWRA water system must be able to meet peak demand at all times. Given that there are both fully and partially supplied communities as well as those with emergency status, what are the effects on the system? Some of the questions being discussed include:

- There are communities that only buy MWRA water during the summer when they cannot pump from their local sources. These summer peak users pay the same amount as fully supplied users but are buying during the time of highest use. Should MWRA have a summer peak rate?
- There are communities with emergency connections that can buy water at any time. This is an insurance policy at no charge. Is this fair?
- Stand by fees are being investigated in other states. Nothing perfectly matches the MWRA system.
- The MWRA has made substantial infrastructure investments and there are concerns about the ability of a community to leave the system and the effect of lost revenue on other communities.
- Two user groups: Those included in the Enabling Act and those that joined the system later. It makes a difference.
- If state policy changes with the SWMI process, MWRA should be prepared.

The discussion will resume in September at the Advisory Board's Operations Committee meeting.

Michael Baram asked what the effect on MWRA might be if DEP issued appropriate safe yields. Steve said some communities would consider MWRA, and some would squeak by without requesting an increase in their Water

Management Act permit by conserving and/or only using their registered amount. He said water has become more expensive and business and industry have realized the benefit of becoming more efficient. Residential use is also decreasing nationally due to more efficient appliances and plumbing codes.

In December, MWRA staff gave a draft of the Capital Budget to the Advisory Board for review.

MWRA Milestones:

- The proposed FY14 five year spending cap is \$793.5 million, less \$265.3 million from the previous five year cap.
- The MWRA will be paying off more debt than they're borrowing.
- MWRA will not be raising its debt ceiling (requires approval by the Legislature).

Lexi passed out updated SWMI information, briefly discussed the status of North Reading in its process to join the MWRA, and announced the joint March meeting on the MWRA budget with the Advisory Board. There is likely to be tour of the NEFCo Pelletizing Plant in Quincy in May for those who are interested.

Paul Lauenstein asked the current wholesale price of MWRA water. Steve said approximately \$3000 dollars per million gallons.

Meeting adjourned.