



WSCAC Meeting

January 10, 2017-10:00 A.M.

Location: MWRA Facilities in Southborough

Members in Bold in Attendance:

Whitney Beals, WSCAC Chair, NE Forestry
Paul Lauenstein, NepRWA
Bill Fadden
Terry Connolly, Town of Ware
Martin Pillsbury, MAPC
Janet Rothrock, League of Women Voters

Michael Baram, BU & CLF
Martha Morgan, Nashua River Watershed
Kurt Tramosch, Wayland Wells
Gerald Eves, PV Trout Unlimited
Andrea Donlon, CRWC

Non –Members in Attendance:

Lexi Dewey, WSCAC staff
Stephen Estes-Smargiassi, MWRA

Lou Taverna, MWRA Advisory Board Chair

WSCAC BUSINESS

WSCAC Chair Whitney Beals called the meeting to order. Members and guests introduced themselves for the purposes of the recording. Whitney announced that the November Meeting Summary required approval. Janet Rothrock made mention of two typo errors; Lexi took note in order to make corrections. William Fadden made a motion to approve the November Meeting Summary and Martha Morgan seconded the motion. Members voted to approve the meeting summary with the corrections noted by Janet.

Whitney then made a motion to approve Janet Rothrock as a member of WSCAC. All members voted in favor. Members then welcomed and thanked Janet for joining the committee.

Lexi Dewey, WSCAC Executive Director, provided the committee with several updates. She first provided an update about the Hatchery Pipeline Project. On December 22nd, Lou Taverna, Jerry Eves, and Lexi attended the valve turning at the McLaughlin Fish Hatchery – 6 mgd will now flow from a new pipe off the CVA to the hatchery. Lexi explained that the hydropower portion of the project is not yet complete. Steve Estes-Smargiassi addressed several questions pertaining to the project and water quality.

Lexi then provided a brief update about the DCR Stewardship Council Meeting held at the Quabbin Visitors Center on Friday, January 6, 2017. At that meeting, DCR Commissioner Leo Roy spoke about DCR’s recreational budget; the department has taken a hard cut of at least six million dollars and they are down from 1,300 full time employees to 800. The positions vacated by the seventeen employees who took early retirement will not be back-filled. Additionally, DCR paid the retirement bonus for each retiree out-of-pocket. Lexi continued to explain that DCR Parks has closed campgrounds and will be bringing on fewer seasonal

employees; the new seasonal employees will be brought on later in the season. Whitney agreed that this represents a significant blow to DCR. He added that the department often seems to be the target of budget cuts; he contended that it is short-sighted on the part of Governor Baker. Whitney believes the legislature should rectify this grim situation.

Kurt asked if the Division of Water Supply Protection (DWSP) at DCR took a similar hit. Lexi, along with Steve, responded that the DWSP is funded by the Massachusetts Water Resource Authority.

Michael Baram asked if the process that led to the budget reductions is closed. He asked if state representatives could take action. Michael also asked if the Stewardship Council Meeting addressed options for restoring facilities and programs, particularly in the western part of the state. Lexi replied that Commissioner Roy did not speak to that at the meeting and there were no state representatives present at the meeting. Lexi suggested that if members felt strongly about the issue, they should consider contacting their legislators.

Janet Rothrock asked if the public is likely to feel the effects of these cuts. Whitney replied that yes, the public will very much feel the effects. Lexi explained that facilities will not be opened for the public to use. Janet asked if the public will see the closings and realize the influence of the budget cuts and actually call their legislators. Lexi said she would look for some news articles or informational notifications that could be distributed.

Paul asked if there is a role for WSCAC in responding to these budget cuts. Lexi responded that it is not in WSCAC's direct purview.

Lexi provided an update from the December Drought Management Task Force Meeting. She stated that WSCAC had signed on to a letter written by the Massachusetts Rivers Alliance regarding potential revisions to the Massachusetts Drought Management Plan. Lexi mentioned that the WSCAC Executive Committee drafted and submitted a separate letter pertaining to revisions of the plan as well. WSCAC's comments focused on the topic of communication. Executive Committee members discussed the possibility of looking into MWRA's drought plan; Lexi suggested that Steve address the Authority's drought plan. Lexi concluded by stating that she will continue to attend the Drought Management Task Force meetings and will continue to provide updates to members.

Paul Lauenstein noted that it is important not to lose sight of the extreme importance of water conservation in the shuffle of drought discussions. He said we do not necessarily know when the next drought will be, but we do know there will be another drought. Paul contended that we should always be preparing in between droughts, even when it is not a "front-burner" issue. He continued to say that MWRA has reduced its water use by over 100 mgd and the Quabbin Reservoir is still at about 80%. If the system was still using as much water as it was before, the level of the reservoir would be significantly lower. Paul concluded by stating that conservation must be a focal point of drought preparedness conversations and strategies.

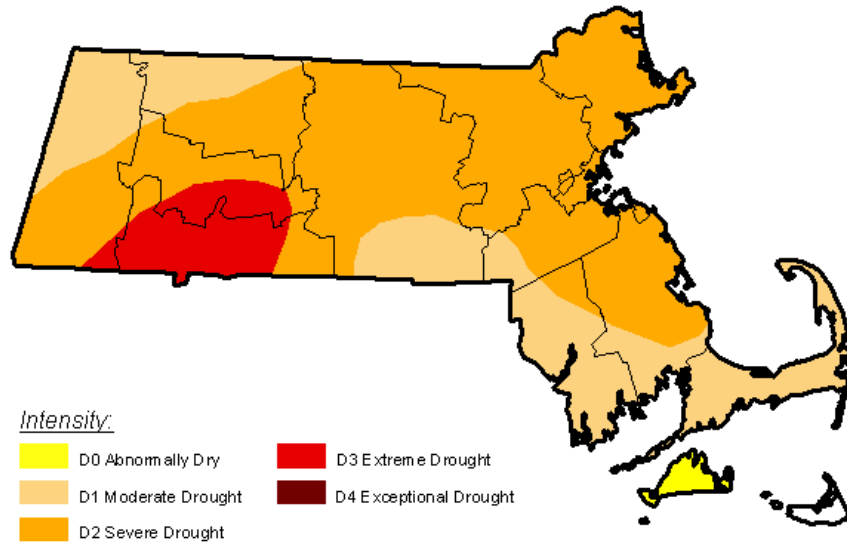
Michael asked if WSCAC planned to have a groundwater-focused meeting in February. Lexi said that she is currently working on putting together a panel and/or scheduling several presentations on the topic for the February meeting.

Whitney asked how many municipalities in Massachusetts have a public water supply delivered to residences. Steve responded that almost all of the municipalities do. Many communities have a public water supply for the densely developed part of town. For example, central business districts often have municipally supplied water. Typically, such systems will consist of a municipal well, as opposed to a reservoir supply.

RESERVOIR AND DROUGHT STATUS UPDATE

STEVE ESTES-SMARGIASSI, MWRA DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND SUSTAINABILITY

Steve began his presentation by reviewing several drought maps from the National Drought Mitigation Center. Massachusetts continues to endure drought conditions, as do a substantial number of states throughout the country. The map pictured below is the National Drought Mitigation Center’s Intensity Map of Massachusetts from January 3, 2017.



Steve informed the committee that Quabbin Reservoir levels have been modeled for the next twelve months (January 2017 – December 2017). The modeling considers varying yield conditions and an annual demand of 220 mgd, which is a 10 mgd increase from current annual demand levels. Steve noted that December 2016 was the thirteenth driest December in the sixty-eight year history of Quabbin yields.

Table 1: Quabbin Reservoir Status with Varying Reservoir Yield Scenarios Looking Forward from January 1, 2017

	1-Month	3-Months	6-Months	12-Months
Median Yield	Below Normal	Below Normal	Normal	Normal
Dry (75th Percentile)	Below Normal	Below Normal	Below Normal	Normal
Driest (of Record)	Below Normal	Below Normal	Below Normal	Below Normal

Evaluating a 24-month scenario using the driest conditions, Quabbin Reservoir would end in the Drought Warning Stage Level.

Steve discussed MWRA’s role in providing assistance to communities impacted by the drought. Communities such as Natick, Braintree, Danvers, and Springfield have been identified as communities which could potentially

be assisted by MWRA. Steve identified Ashland, Cambridge, Lynn, Peabody, and Worcester as communities which have already received MWRA assistance.

Steve emphasized that 2016 had the driest summer on record. With respect to inches of precipitation measured at Logan Airport, the summer of 2016 (June-August) only saw 3.92 inches. Steve compared that figure to the long-term average of 9.90 inches. For the last four months, it has continued to be dry in the service area.

Steve informed the committee that the Wachusett Reservoir is operating at normal levels. He then concluded his presentation by reviewing the current Sudbury system elevations. He explained that winter drawdowns for the 2016/2017 season have been suspended due to drought conditions.

The committee thanked Steve for his informational update.

The meeting was adjourned.

The next WSCAC meeting will be held on February 21st at 10:00 A.M.
at the MWRA Facilities in Southborough.