



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

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WSCAC Meeting

Location: MWRA Facilities
Southborough, MA
December 11, 2018-10:00 A.M.

Members in Bold in Attendance:

Michael Baram, WSCAC Chair, BU
Whitney Beals, NE Forestry
Terry Connolly, Town of Ware & Trout
Unlimited
William Copithorne, Town of Arlington
Andrea Donlon, CT River Conservancy
Gerald Eves, Trout Unlimited
Bill Fadden, OARS

Bill Kiley, BWSC
Paul Lauenstein, NepRWA
Jean McCluskey, ACEC/MA
Martha Morgan, Nashua River Watershed
Martin Pillsbury, MAPC
Janet Rothrock, League of Women Voters
Kurt Tramposch, Wayland Wells
Roger Wrubel, Mass Audubon

Non-Members in Attendance:

Lexi Dewey, WSCAC staff
Andreae Downs, WAC
James Guiod, MWRA Advisory Board
Lisa Gustavsen, DCR Assistant Reg. Director-
Quabbin

Jenna Perschka, Lieutenant DCR Watershed Ranger
Kerry Princiotta, Captain DCR Watershed Ranger
Alexandra Peckham, WSCAC staff

WSCAC Business

Michael Baram called the meeting to order, asked for comments on the minutes. The meeting did not have a quorum to vote on the November meeting summary. Michael turned the meeting over to Lexi Dewey.

Lexi announced the new Wachusett Regional Director, Jamie Carr, and the new Environmental Analyst, Larry Pistrang. She then provided an update on the Water Supply Protection Trust (WSPT) meeting from the previous week which discussed vacancies in the DWSP (about which WSCAC submitted a letter to the Trust), forestry issues, fishing/hunting programs, and finance.

Michael asked why positions are going unfilled at DCR.

Lexi said that the Trust members are concerned as well because adequate staff is needed to complete the FY19 DCR Work Plan. Vandana Rao, designee for the Secretary of Energy & Environmental Affairs on the Trust mentioned that the Commissioner, the Secretary and staff for Administration & Finance are working on moving this issue forward. Lexi mentioned that DWSP positions are funded by the MWRA ratepayers as part of the MWRA budget. Therefore, the role played by Administration & Finance is very different. Watershed positions are not funded through the General Budget.

Discussion ensued regarding the vacant positions and their funding, with a brief pause for an introduction from James Guidod of MWRA Advisory Board.

Michael noted that due to a few late arrivals, the meeting now has a quorum, and asked again for comments on the minutes. Bill Fadden moved to approve, Kurt seconded, and the minutes passed unanimously.

Lexi announced that the Town of Ashland is joining the MWRA as a partial user. Burlington is requesting an emergency water declaration from MassDEP so they can use MWRA water while they complete water infrastructure upgrades. The town is also interested in joining the MWRA water system.

Michael asked about wastewater, and Lexi confirmed that both towns are already wastewater customers.

Andreae mentioned that MWRA has some overflow issues, possibly stormwater related, so the Authority is not interested in adding many more customers to the wastewater system.

Bill Kiley asked about gravity systems vs pumps, and whether that would affect wastewater costs for customers.

Andreae said it's primarily gravity systems, and that MWRA would probably charge communities if new pumps needed to be installed.

Roger asked about the South Shore where rain is leaking into sewer pipes, and Bill Kiley asked about the process of fixing leaks. Andreae responded that it's a constant battle.

Lexi announced that WSCAC has been invited to tour a marijuana growing facility in Franklin. The tour will be limited, so if members are interested, they can email the WSCAC office. Lexi summarized the Executive Committee meeting at the end of November. The discussion focused on what to include in the letter to the WSPT regarding DWSP vacancies and follow-up on forestry concerns.

Ace (Alexandra) reminded everyone to submit their Conflict of Interest forms, and their travel vouchers for reimbursement. She also mentioned that if anyone would like contact information for their state reps and senators, please let her know (and include a home address, for ease of looking up). She asked that if anyone has seen WSCAC emails go into spam filters, please let the office know, as this would help resolve the email issues WSCAC has been experiencing.

Members engaged in a brief discussion about the Water Supply Protection Trust with a brief history. See [here](#) for more information.

Featured Presentation

Lisa Gustavsen, the featured speaker, is the Assistant Regional Director of the Quabbin/Ware Region, and has been working with DCR-DWSP for 25 years. She was accompanied by two rangers, Kerry Princiotta, Captain and Jenna Perschka, Lieutenant of the Quabbin/Ware Watershed Rangers.

Lisa discussed the process of updating Ware River Public Access Plan, and outlined the steps currently taking place over the course of 2018-2019. The initial step is the Public Engagement Plan Phase, where DCR is collecting information from stakeholders and the general public on the types of recreation they want from the watershed lands.

DCR staff is working with members of the Ware River Watershed Advisory Committee. Roger asked about the selection process for the WRWAC. Lisa responded that there are named entities in the legislation dictating WRWAC's guidelines, and that there are representatives from specific groups. See below for information on WRWAC (from this [link](#)):

Ware River Watershed Advisory Committee (WRWAC)

The Massachusetts legislature passed an act in 1995 creating the Ware River Watershed Advisory Committee (WRWAC; MGL Ch. 92, Section 104). This Act relieved the Quabbin Watershed Advisory Committee (QWAC) of its advisory duties within the Ware River Watershed. The purpose of the WRWAC is to "advise the division on its policies and regulations regarding recreational activities, land use and environmental, wildlife and habitat matters within the Ware River waters." This legislation, introduced by a local citizen and sponsored by a local Senator, directs the specific composition of the new committee. The legislation states that the WRWAC will be composed of:

...one person from three names nominated by each of the following organizations: the Massachusetts Council of Sportsmen, the Worcester County League of Sportsmen, Trout Unlimited, a rod and gun club in the town of Barre, Hubbardston, Oakham or Rutland, a designee of the board of selectmen of each of the towns of Barre, Hubbardston, Oakham and Rutland, a representative of the historical societies in each of the towns of Barre, Hubbardston, Oakham and Rutland, a representative of the Massachusetts Wildlife Federation, a representative of the Massachusetts Audubon Society, a representative of the Sierra Club, and a representative of the Upper Ware river watershed association and one member from the general public... (MGL Ch. 92, §104)

The mandated advisory committee for the Ware River watershed complemented the Division's 1995 decision to develop separate Public Access Plans for the Quabbin Reservoir watershed and the Ware River watershed. In 1997, DCR's predecessor helped establish the Ware River Watershed Advisory Committee (WRWAC) by accepting nominations and offering in-house services to set-up the committee. In its first year, the WRWAC met fifteen times to discuss public access issues on DCR lands. In October 1999, the WRWAC submitted a list of ten specific recommendations regarding the Divisions' draft DCR Public Access Management Plan Update – Ware River Watershed 2000. Most of the Advisory Committee's recommendations were incorporated into the final Plan. Since then, the Advisory Committee has met regularly throughout the year for a decade.

DCR has designed a public survey, [available on the DCR website](#), to encourage public feedback. They are meeting with a variety of user groups and making a strong effort towards transparency during the update of the

Ware River Public Access Plan. Once the internal draft of the Plan is completed, it will be presented to the MWRA, MassDEP, and WRWAC for feedback. Following that, there will be a public comment period for thirty days.

Lisa went on to define stakeholder groups which include bikers, horseback riders, snowmobilers, hikers, and hunters among others. Abutters to DCR lands also play an important role in the conversation process. DCR's first priority is to always ensure the safety and quality of the water supply. Appropriate recreational uses which do not impact the public drinking water supply are defined in the Public Access Plans for each watershed.

Michael asked for clarification regarding the approval process, and Kurt asked about how other groups who are affected by changes to the public access plan are informed. Lisa explained that DCR has relationships with the formalized clubs such as the snowmobilers, bikers and equestrians, and there is office hours available for discussion with staff. Ware River Advisory Committee members help spread the information, and DCR has begun asking local towns to post the information on their websites.

Kurt asked whether there have been any significant changes in who's involved. Lisa explained that this is constantly evolving, based on what people are looking for. There's a wide range of groups and interests, and some groups share trails, while others can't. A major goal for the Public Access Management Plan is to understand what people are looking for, and to be clear about what's allowed on these lands, and what is not.

Michael asked whether the stakeholders will be satisfied with designated trails, and Lisa responded that in the end, the safety of the water supply is the most important goal.

Lisa said that DCR currently owns 101,701 fee-owned acres in the watersheds (23,000 acres in the Ware River Watershed), in addition to 8,449 acres held in Watershed Preservation Restrictions.

Janet asked about what the Sierra Club as a stakeholder is looking for, and Lisa said their goals are non-motorized trails for walking, kayaking etc.

Lisa briefly reviewed the principles and guidelines for what is allowed. See the [DCR Management Principles for Public Access Management in the Ware River Watershed](#) and the [Update of the Ware River Watershed Public Access Management Plan](#) for more information.

Paul asked how surveillance is done and whether drones are used. At this time, DCR isn't using drones, just cameras. There was further discussion about security and protection of the water supply.

Janet asked about cultural resources, such as Native American stone structures. Lisa confirmed that DCR has [an archaeologist on staff](#).

Kurt and Michael asked about monitoring abutters and privately owned properties, and Lisa explained that foresters walk the boundaries regularly. Lands that have conservation restrictions are also monitored by DCR staff.

Bill Fadden asked about horses and dogs, which are allowed in the Ware River Watershed in specific locations, with specific restrictions.

Kurt asked, in areas where hunting is permitted, whether lead ammunition is prohibited. Paul mentioned that after Flint, MI, MWRA is monitoring lead, which should be banned from fishing, at least. Lisa confirmed that DCR is running an awareness campaign, and has asked all fishermen to turn in their lead sinkers.

Kurt asked whether concern over climate change is incorporated into the principles, and Lisa confirmed that DCR has recently brought staff together to look at potential impacts in the watersheds from climate change.

Michael offered WSCAC's assistance, if we can be useful.

Lisa introduced DCR-DWSP staff Kerry Princiotta, Ranger Captain and Jenna Perschka, Ranger Lieutenant at Quabbin.

Jenna explained the structure of the ranger program: there are nine full-time rangers working staggered shifts seven days a week, from sunrise to sunset. The rangers offer a wide range of expertise, from outdoor education to wildlife and environmental backgrounds. All rangers are certified first responders, and they regularly participate in trainings on hazardous materials, night emergencies and spill containment.

Rangers patrol on foot, bike, ATVs, and boats as well as using snowshoes and cross-country skis when the weather demands it. They are not law enforcement officials and they do not carry weapons, but they can issue citations. Additionally, they work very closely with the state police and EPOs (Environmental Police Officers).

Lexi asked where the EPOs are based, and about Shaft 12 security. There is an Environmental Police headquarters in Hull and also in Montague. Rangers are able to call for help. Shaft 12 now has live-feed cameras for constant monitoring, and the State Police go by daily.

Paul asked about rangers' personal safety. The rangers don't work in pairs unless they're on the boat, ATV, or snowmobile patrols, so they use discretion in deciding when to engage. They are also offered ballistic vests for their patrols.

Kurt asked about dumping and stormwater violations and Paul asked about how citations are written. Jenna responded that the rangers are always on the lookout for dumping. The citations begin at a verbal level, move to a written citation, and then to a fine. EPOs can write higher-cost citations.

James asked about how repeat offenders are tracked, and Jenna explained that there is a database updated regularly in order to track this information. Paul asked how visitors can know the rules. Jenna noted that there are signs and kiosks posted at trailheads, the visitor center and online with all the activities that are allowed and not allowed in the watershed areas.

Bill Kiley asked about ATVs, and whether they're under a different set of rules. Jenna explained that public ATVs are not allowed anywhere. Kurt asked about wildlife interactions, and Jenna said that there aren't many such interactions. DCR's Director of Natural Resources and staff wildlife biologist monitor wildlife through several programs which include eagles, loons, gulls, deer and moose.

Michael asked about hazardous spills, and how the order of authority works in these situations. Jenna said that DCR staff is prepared for spills due to the numerous annual trainings provided to DCR and MWRA staff. Authority is given to those with the most experience with the particular scenario at hand.

Janet asked about specific rules including no metal detectors being allowed, and how the “no profanity” rule is enforced. Jenna said that some rules, like the prohibition of metal detectors, are passed down from DCR law, and the profanity rules are really to allow for the prevention of disruptions to the peace (e.g. if someone is playing music with profanity too loudly, this offers others the opportunity to request that they turn it down, with authority backing them up).

Kurt asked whether there are any apps available that would tell people what’s allowed and what’s not. Jenna said there aren’t any such apps, and it’s best to read the signs and/or use the DCR website. Roger asked if there are any trends that they’ve seen over the years regarding violations, and Jenna said there’s nothing specific.

Michael asked about why there seem to be so many violations with very few citations. Jenna explained that the rangers may not always catch the person who’s breaking the rules, but only see evidence of the act, but they track it for their records.

Kurt asked about the animal violations, and Jenna mentioned that at one point, there was a person with a cow, but most of the animal violations are dogs being let off leash in prohibited areas. Rangers have a pamphlet that explains why dogs are not allowed. Nearly every violation that occurs is a result of genuine ignorance on behalf of the public, thus the pamphlets are very helpful. The question was also posed whether there is any homeless population living on the lands, but Jenna said that there is not.

Michael asked what the most common violation is, and Jenna said that the most typical ones are swimming, mountain biking, and dogs off leash or where they’re not allowed. Kurt asked if professional dog-walkers ever attempt to use the lands to walk their charges, but Jenna noted that there’s a clause forbidding commercial enterprise on these watershed lands, so if that were to happen (which she has not encountered), they would be able to stop it quickly.

Paul asked when a ranger enforces rules, if she specifies that the reason for these rules is that the land is watershed land. Jenna said yes, absolutely.

Lisa, Jenna, and Kerry were thanked for their presentations.

The meeting was adjourned.

**WSCAC will meet again on January 15, 2018 at 10:00 AM at the MWRA Facilities in Southborough.
Please [visit our website](#) for more information on this meeting.**