

Central District Activities – April, 2018

Wildlife – A third Central District collared bear emerged from her den and left the median strip on Route 2 where she had spent the majority of the winter. District and Westboro staff were able to locate and immobilize her in secure surroundings. Her two yearlings remained in the area while the sow was being worked up but could not be freed to be immobilized.

Culvert bear traps are currently being deployed and pre-baited in the central part of Worcester County to try and capture more sows to add to the ongoing telemetry study.

Spring turkey season opens on Monday, April 30th and runs through May 26th. Only bearded birds may be taken and a turkey permit is required in addition to a hunting or sporting license. The Youth Turkey Hunt will be held on April 28 and is open to Hunter Education graduates, ages 12 – 17, who have completed the Youth Turkey Hunt Program. Past participants must complete and mail the past participant application available on the MassWildlife website. All turkey hunters must have a “Hunt Safely” decal affixed to their shotgun.

Fisheries – Trout stocking continues with an Earth Day event held at Lake Quinsigamond in Shrewsbury. Other water bodies recently stocked include Webster Lake, Wallum Lake, Mumford River, Hopedale Pond, Fort Pond, Whalom Lake, Kendall Pond, Crow Hill Pond, Big Alum Pond, South Pond, Prince River, West Branch Ware River, Burnshirt River, Quinsigamond River, Long Pond, Barretts Pond, Quinapoxet River, Stillwater River, Conners Pond, East Branch of the Swift River, Louisa Lake, Pratt Pond, Lake Dennison, Millers River, Ware River, Quinebaug River and Singletary Lake. Trout stocking reports will be updated daily at the Mass.gov/trout web page. A list and map of trout stocked waters will be available on the trout page with the date and species of trout stocked. During the first three weeks of trout stocking Central District crews covered over 2,000 miles to reach Worcester County Waters.

Wachusett Reservoir opened on Saturday April 7, Wallum Lake opened Saturday April 14 and Quabbin Reservoir opens on Saturday, April 21. Good catches of lake trout were reported at Wachusett during the first week of the season.

Natural Heritage – The Bald Eagle Nesting Survey was held on April 6th. State Ornithologist Drew Vitz has not yet released preliminary numbers. He does report that there were a total of 68 known bald eagle territories during the 2017 nesting season. Since the first successful nests were documented in 1989 a total of 704 bald eagle chicks have been fledged in the wild. The District received compelling eagle reports from Oxford, Sutton and Hubbardston and will be investigating to determine the presence of new nests. Two kestrel nesting boxes were installed at the Muddy Brook WMA in Hardwick.

Land Management/Stewardship– Bids were awarded for forestry work at both the Muddy Brook and Birch Hill WMAs. Blanchflower Logging has begun road improvement work at Muddy Brook while Anderson Timber Harvesting is gearing up for the work at Birch Hill. Bee, bird and other surveys are being conducted by UMass and contractors to determine responses by wildlife to habitat management.

Mowing has commenced at the Pine Hill section of the Bolton Flats WMA.

An agricultural License Agreement was awarded to Gretchen Foster of Westminster for 79 acres of hay fields at the High Ridge WMA.

Fee Stewardship Coordinator Christine Chisholm is working with the District to revisit a boundary issue at the Fisherman's Access at Leadmine Pond in Sturbridge.

Motor vehicle encroachments and a timber trespass are being investigated at the Moose Hill WMA.

The District Manager spoke with District Land Agent James McCarthy and Commissioner Ron Amidon about a possible land protection partnership to use the funds generated for the Worcester County League by the purchase of a Conservation Easement over their Babbit/Gribbons property in New Braintree.

District staff met with contractual engineers, the Office of Fishing and Boating Access, and interested construction companies at pre-bid meetings for work relating to the Welsh Pond and Lackey Pond Dams in Sutton.

Outreach/Notable Meetings – The District coordinated a meeting between a private conservation fund raising organization, Westboro administrators and the Massachusetts Outdoor Heritage Foundation to discuss means

to raise additional revenues for MassWildlife. Various avenues will be pursued to determine the viability of this potential funding opportunity.

District staff attended a two day OSHA training workshop at the Field Headquarter in Westboro.

The District Manager and his wife will be giving an Earth Day presentation on the recovery of the bald eagle at 4:00 PM at the Broad Meadow Brook Audubon Sanctuary in Worcester on Sunday, April 22nd.

The District Manager and his wife were the guests of the Worcester County League at their Annual Appreciation Banquet. League Board of Director and Department of Fish and Game Commissioner Ron Amidon was kind enough to speak on my upcoming retirement and thanked me for my 37 years of service. Lt. Governor Karyn Polito also offered congratulations. The recognition was very much appreciated.

We also attended the Massachusetts Sportsmen's Council Banquet where Jack Buckley, Valley District Manager Ralph Taylor and I received Lifetime Achievement Awards, presented by John Kellstrand and Mike Moss. The award was likewise greatly appreciated.

The District Managers positions for both the Central and Valley Districts have been posted on the MassCareers website. The Central District Manager's duties will be divided among other District staff as well as assistant Director of Operations Trina Moruzzi until the vacancy is filled. Ralph Taylor will serve as the District Manager in the Valley District until his retirement on June 9th.

District Wildlife Biologist Mike Morelly will serve as interim liaison with the Worcester County League and will continue to provide monthly updates for the Sportsmen's News.

It has been a sincere pleasure working with you all.

Bill Davis
District Manager
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