

# WSCAC Membership

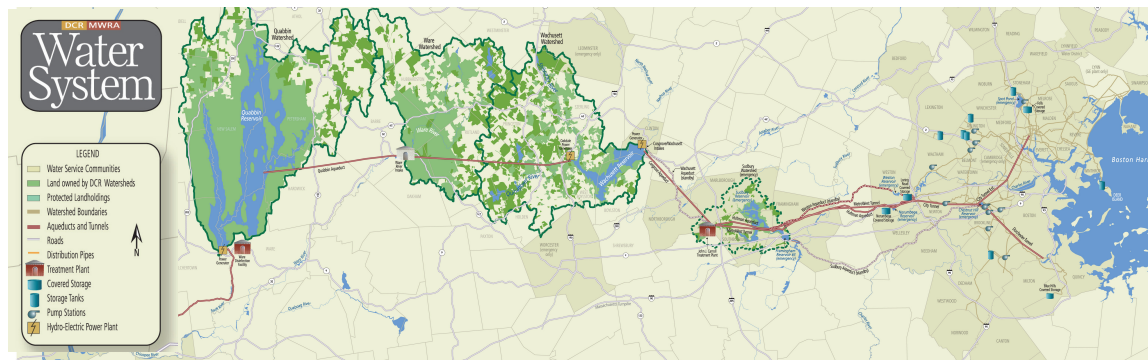
WSCAC's diverse membership is balanced geographically and by interest. The committee has a network of volunteers that bring professional and practical experience to a wide range of MWRA water supply and program issues. Members represent watershed associations, water utilities, environmental groups, business interests, educational institutions, regional planning, agricultural interests, sporting organizations and state legislators within the MWRA service area and beyond to donor water communities surrounding the Quabbin Reservoir.

WSCAC meets monthly at locations in the Central and Eastern parts of the state. Call or email our office for more information.

## The Quabbin and Wachusett Reservoirs

- Water used by the MWRA comes from the Quabbin Reservoir, about 65 miles west of Boston, and the Wachusett Reservoir, about 35 miles west of Boston. The reservoirs are filled by rain and snow falling on the watersheds. The precipitation turns into streams that flow into the reservoirs.
- The Quabbin and Wachusett Reservoirs together can store 477 billion gallons of water for everyday use.
- Water levels are monitored daily with Wachusett kept relatively fixed and the Quabbin fluctuating with precipitation and watershed runoff.
- Over 75% of the watershed lands that surround the reservoirs are protected from development. Much of the natural undeveloped land is covered in forest and wetlands which help keep the water clean and clear. To ensure safety, the MWRA tests over 1500 water samples per month, and the reservoirs are patrolled daily by the Department of Conservation and Recreation's Division of Water Supply.

### DCR/MWRA Water System



## About the MWRA

MWRA is a Massachusetts public authority established by an act of the Legislature in 1984 to provide wholesale water and sewer services to 2.5 million people and more than 5,500 large industrial users in 61 metropolitan Boston communities. Visit [www.mwra.com](http://www.mwra.com).

**How can you help meet the challenges to our water supply? Become a WSCAC member!**

### Contact us at:

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# Invest Your Time in Water's Future



### Get involved with:

- Water Conservation
- Watershed Protection
- Public Education

## WSCAC

WATER SUPPLY CITIZENS  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE

to the Mass. Water Resources Authority

# About WSCAC

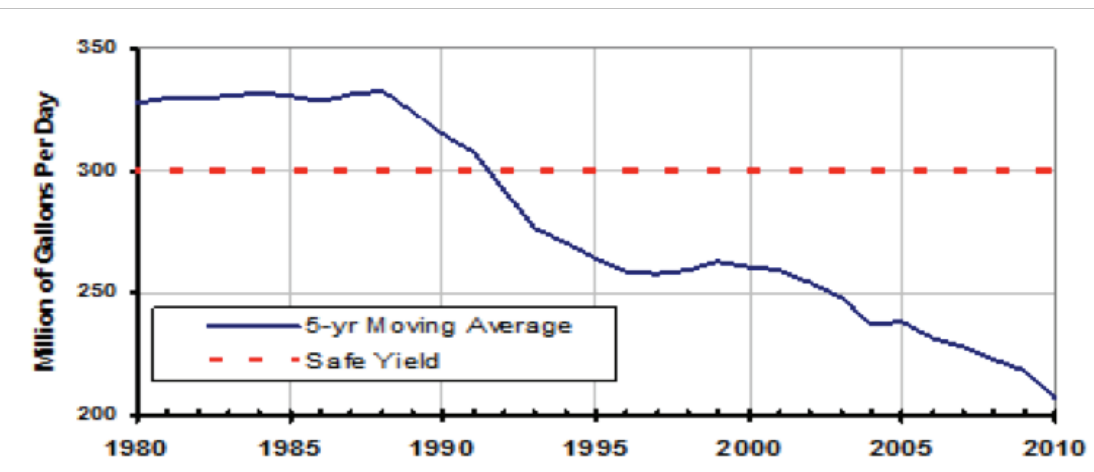
Originally formed in 1977 to review a proposed water supply diversion for the metropolitan Boston area, the Water Supply Citizens Advisory Committee (WSCAC) of the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) represents an unusual approach to engaging citizen participation in water resource policy decisions. WSCAC provides an ongoing source of public input for the MWRA and state agencies. It has participated in securing passage of state legislation such as the Interbasin Transfer Act of 1983, the Water Management Act of 1985, and the Watershed Protection Act of 1992. WSCAC is an independent committee supported by the MWRA rate payers.

Since the inception of the Committee, over thirty years, it has advised the MWRA on water conservation and watershed protection strategies. The Authority has implemented recommended leak repair and demand management programs under which the use of water use has dropped significantly below the system's safe yield.

## Total Reservoir Withdrawals: Five Year Running Average 1980 to 2010

The chart below demonstrates the reduction in average water use in decreasing reservoir withdrawals through 2010. Demand management and supply conservation were made possible through:

- Vigorous leak detection, water pipeline replacement and rehabilitation on MWRA and community pipes
- Meter improvements to track and analyze community water use
- New water-efficient technology for reductions in residential water use
- A change in the state plumbing code requiring low-flow toilets
- Retrofitting homes with low-flow plumbing devices
- Extensive public information and school education programs



## Current WSCAC Issues

**State Water Policy-Sustainable Water Management Initiative (SWMI)** WSCAC supports a scientifically determined Safe Yield that helps manage withdrawals from local sources to minimize negative impacts to stressed water bodies as documented by USGS and Massachusetts Fish and Game.

**Watershed Protection** WSCAC supports water source protection through land acquisition, conservation restrictions and other planning options. Communities are responsible for land use and the effects of water-consuming activities within their jurisdictions. The use of zoning laws, building codes and public health laws provide tools to guide growth and protect local water sources. The increase in impervious pavement from unregulated growth has severely impacted many watersheds in eastern Massachusetts.

**Water Conservation** WSCAC supports a combination of strong water conservation and demand management as exemplified in the Massachusetts Water Conservation Standards. Options include: outdoor irrigation restrictions, ascending block rate water pricing, town-wide metering, private well registration, the use of water-saving devices for commercial and residential development, and protection of local recharge areas.

**MWRA Water System Expansion** Communities applying to the MWRA for admission to the water system must show a scientifically identified need with a full range of documented water restrictions in place. Admission may be considered on a case-by-case basis if technically feasible and documentation proves that all tools have been utilized, stormwater and recharge issues are being addressed, local sources are protected and additional water is needed.

## The Benefit of Citizen Involvement

WSCAC members regard the following as the most important lessons learned from the committee's over thirty years of existence:

- Active citizen participation is a good investment, ensuring publicly supportable, cost effective and environmentally sound solutions
- To gain credibility, citizen input must be sought from diverse sources
- Effective citizen input entails responsibilities for both the citizens' committee and the affected agencies: The citizens' committee must engage in pertinent, factual, and thoughtful criticism of the agency, and agency officials must respond receptively and professionally to input
- Citizen input committees need to communicate with the public as well as with the agencies they advise
- Informed citizen input on major policy decisions requires an independent, full-time staff answerable only to the citizens committee