



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

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July 29, 2015

Commissioner Carol Sanchez
Dept. of Conservation and Recreation
251 Causeway Street
Boston, MA 02114

Re: MARTAB Request to Allow Single-Track Mountain Biking on Ware River Watershed Lands

Dear Commissioner Sanchez,

As the formally contracted advisory committee to the MWRA Board of Directors and staff, and a stakeholder in the programs and policies of DCR's Division of Water Supply Protection (DWSP), the Water Supply Citizens Advisory Committee welcomes the opportunity to comment on the issues related to illegal single-track mountain biking in the Ware River Watershed.

The Division of Water Supply Protection has extensive public access plans for each watershed which document the activities that are allowed. DCR watershed lands are not public parks and are not staffed as such. This is reflected in the number of rangers and in the Division's budget which is allocated by the Water Supply Protection Trust. The payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT payments) that are made annually to watershed communities by MWRA ratepayers address the costs of acquiring and maintaining land for water quality purposes.

As the unfiltered public water supply for 2.5 million people, the Division is lawfully governed by stringent state and federal regulations designed to protect water quality, including EPA's Surface Water Treatment Rule and the Massachusetts Watershed Protection Act.

There are numerous trails throughout the state available for single-track mountain biking. Nonetheless, indifference towards DCR's public access rules, the destruction of watershed property through the cutting of illegal trails, and the harassment of DCR employees continues. This behavior illustrates an unacceptable level of disrespect for the agency and for MWRA ratepayers who have spent millions of dollars to acquire and protect this valuable and irreplaceable resource.

Numerous recreational groups request access to watershed property for special activities. Inquires for additional usage are thoughtfully discussed and legitimately vetted through the legislated Ware River and Quabbin Watershed Advisory Committees. WSCAC has consistently supported appropriate public access within DCR watersheds with the stipulation that protecting water quality remain the highest priority. Many public water suppliers, both filtered and unfiltered, prohibit all public access. DCR is to be commended for its attention to suitable recreational opportunities, including boating on the Quabbin Reservoir.

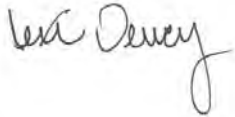
Due to the current illegal actions of the single-track mountain bikers, we are highly skeptical that a three-year trial program as advocated by MARTAB is worthy of serious consideration. Single-track mountain biking is not a passive recreational use as evidenced by the damage done by riders. DCR regulations are not onerous and there are plenty of recreational biking opportunities in Massachusetts on and off watershed property.

We respectfully request that DCR's policies on public access remain intact and that the Division be allowed to significantly increase fines to repeat offenders.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Whitney Beals". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent loop at the end of the last name.

Whitney Beals
Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lexi Dewey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping loop at the end of the last name.

Lexi Dewey
Executive Director