



Worcester County League of Sportsmen's Clubs

Dear MA State Senators, MA State Representatives, and MA Wildlife Officials:

Attached on the second page is the web posting of the scheduled public hearing on the proposed dog regulation changes for State Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) by MassWildlife. We understand these Regulation Changes do not require Legislation, however we assume you will be hearing pros and cons from your respected constituency and that is the reason for our League's letter, whereby members of this League reside in your constituency.

The Worcester County League of Sportsmen's Clubs representing 25,000 + sportsmen from 50+ clubs in Worcester County are in full and total support of these proposed Regulation Changes by MassWildlife.

Often, we hear of WMA incidents where a hunter's outing is disrupted by unleashed non-hunting dogs interfering with the hunter and their hunting dog, the hunter observing stocked game being chased and harassed by these unleashed dogs, and further observed that common use areas such as parking lots and entrances to fields and stone wall passages are littered with feces. We envision adoption of these Regulation Changes and enforcing them will improve the overall experience of our state's publicly shared wildlife areas year-round.

The state of MA is not the first state to adopt Wildlife Management Area leash regulations. Many states across the nation have already recognized the challenges of mixed use public WMA land including Alabama, Montana, New Jersey, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Wyoming. <https://www.animallaw.info/article/table-state-and-federal-laws-concerning-dogs-chasing-wildlife>

The League plans to have representatives present at the Public Hearing on February 6th, to convey the League's support and answer any questions.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Wayne M. Adams".

Wayne M. Adams

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Cc: Nish Nishan, Worcester County League President

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WESTBOROUGH — MassWildlife is proposing leash and waste disposal regulations for dogs on Wildlife Management Areas. A public hearing has been scheduled for February 6, 2018 at 7 PM at the [MassWildlife Field Headquarters](#), 1 Rabbit Hill Road, Westborough, 01581.

The Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MassWildlife) has a long tradition of welcoming dogs on Wildlife Management Areas (WMA), and dogs are still welcome on WMAs under this proposal.

MassWildlife proposes to take this action due to repeated complaints from WMA users about negative and unsafe encounters with unleashed dogs and issues with dog waste. MassWildlife protects and manages these areas to sustain wildlife abundance and diversity and provide wildlife-related recreation, including hunting, fishing and wildlife-watching, while at the same time providing a safe and enjoyable outdoor experience for all visitors. Therefore:

1. The proposed regulations require leashing dogs and other domestic animals on WMAs. Dogs may be off-leash only when hunting or hunt-training with licensed hunters under existing regulations, or if they are participating in retriever or bird dog trial events that have been permitted by MassWildlife. Leashing dogs decreases conflicts with both people and other dogs, resulting in a safer and more positive experience for everyone.
2. The proposal also requires dog owners to pick up dog waste and dispose of it offsite. Removing dog waste reduces nuisance and protects the safety and health of dogs and other pets, people, and wildlife.

Information on the public hearing, public comment process and proposed regulatory language is posted on MassWildlife's website at [Mass.gov/masswildlife-public-hearings](#).