

*Town of Weymouth
Massachusetts*

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Press Release

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Chief Fuller and Mayor Hedlund Announce New Weymouth Police Department Natural Resources Unit

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Weymouth, MA – Weymouth Chief Richard Fuller and Mayor Robert L. Hedlund are proud to announce the creation of a Natural Resources Unit within the Weymouth Police Department. The Natural Resources Unit was created by merging the existing Animal Control Unit and the Harbormaster/Marine Unit. The new unit falls under the Special Operations Division of the Police Department. The unit will protect, preserve, promote and manage the natural resources, waters, wild animals, domestic animal laws and all state and local laws regarding hunting, fishing, and all-terrain vehicles.

“Weymouth will benefit greatly from forming our Natural Resources Unit,” **said Police Chief Richard Fuller**. “The Town of Weymouth has a number of natural resource areas including Wessagussett Beach, Whitman’s Pond, Great Pond, Great Esker Park, Osprey Overlook Park and numerous other parks, bodies of water and wooded areas which the Natural Resource Unit will patrol to ensure compliance with laws while also providing year-round public safety for all residents and visitors.”

The Natural Resources Unit will be responsible for ensuring adherence to all requisite laws, ordinances, rules, and regulations while also improving overall safety on a longer-term basis through the education and enforcement of local, state, and maritime laws along with domestic animal laws and fishing and hunting laws.

The Town of Weymouth Natural Resources Unit will:

- Patrol the waterways (including ponds), mooring fields, marinas and promote the responsible and safe use of all waters in the Town of Weymouth.

- Mitigate conflicts between resource users and addresses public health and safety threats associated with aggressive, sick and injured wildlife or domestic animals and other natural hazards.
- Manage shellfish resources for recreational and commercial shell fishermen.
- Ensure compliance with the licensing, vaccination, leash laws and other town ordinances regarding animals, promote the humane treatment of all animals, address aggressive animal problems to insure their safety and safety of the general public.
- Provide enforcement of all state and local laws regarding waterways, wild/domestic animals, OHV's, hunting, fishing and park regulations.

"I am excited to announce this new Natural Resources Unit within our Special Operations Division which will enhance public safety in not only a cost-effective manner but also operationally by harnessing existing resources and talent that builds on the skills and training of our current complement of officers," **said Mayor Hedlund.**

Officers within the Natural Resource Unit are Officer Jack O'Rourke of the Marine Unit along with Assistant Harbormasters Steve Deschenes, Tim Routhier and John McLaughlin. Also assigned to the Natural Resources Unit are Animal Control Officers Michael Parker and Brian Willard who are sworn in as animal control officers, special police officers and shellfish constables. Mooring permits will be handled by Officer O'Rourke and Officer Parker through Online Mooring.

Like other coastal communities along the South Shore, the Natural Resource Unit will provide adequate response and management of the Town's varied geographical resources. Weymouth has 12.5 miles of waterfront along with hundreds of acres of parks and open spaces. Weymouth contains Metro Boston's largest Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) and is home to such amenities as the Great Esker Park and one of the largest anadromous herring fish runs in the northeast. Protecting these resources is a priority of the town's and the new enforcement unit will allow for not only the protection of these spaces but increased public access through additional safety, protection, and education.

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