

After 38 years of service, Massachusetts Div. of Fisheries & Wildlife Chief of Info & Education retires

Wildlife education and sharing a love of outdoor recreation were at the heart of Larson's 38 years of state service.

After over 38 years of state service, Marion E. Larson retired in early March from her position as Chief of MassWildlife's Information and Education (I&E) Section. Marion joined MassWildlife in 1991, after she had served the Commonwealth for seven years as an Environmental Police Officer in Northern Worcester and Middlesex counties under the then-Department of Fish, Wildlife and Environmental Law Enforcement.

Marion earned a Bachelor's of Science degree in Environmental Interpretation/Education from the University of Vermont, and she began her MassWildlife career in I&E as a Wildlife Education Specialist, coordinating Project WILD, a national program that provides ecology and conservation teaching resources and training to K-12 teachers and serving on the Massachusetts Envirothon steering committee, in addition to providing trainings, coordinating public displays and events, and performing many other related duties.



Massachusetts Div. of Fisheries & Wildlife photo.

In later years, Marion was the Outreach Coordinator, fielding emails and phone calls from the public; providing content for the agency's website; organizing meetings, programs, and events; developing the agency's newsletter, first in paper form, then in an email format; and handling press inquiries in coordination with the Department of Fish and Game and the Secretariat of Energy and the Environment. In that role, she also kept her finger on the pulse of the work of staff throughout the agency, constantly learning from her colleagues and then translating that knowledge for the public.

Marion was promoted to her ultimate position of Chief of I&E

in 2012. During her tenure, she served on the board of directors of the Massachusetts Junior Conservation Camp, on the Massachusetts Envirothon Council, as part of the Massachusetts State Commission for Conservation of Soil, Water, and Related Resources' grant review team, and on the Northeast Information & Education Association. While she was Chief, the agency developed and implemented its highly successful social-media outreach and marketing strategy; focused its efforts on hunter and angler recruitment, retention, and reactivation; opened its new LEED Platinum certified Field Headquarters in Westborough; and proudly celebrated its 150th anniversary with a gala, full-day open house at the Field Headquarters with activities and exhibits contributed by staff from across the agency. Marion seemed to be everywhere at once that day, exhibiting her trademark sense of fun and enthusiasm for all things wild.

The hallmarks of Marion's successful career are the lasting connections she made across agencies and organizations statewide and the seemingly effortless, down-to-earth rapport she always maintained with members of the press and the public alike. Her general wildlife and conservation knowledge and ability to convey it simply are matched only by her curiosity and enthusiasm for the subjects. Marion's lifelong passion for education was the catalyst for much of her work. As she noted in her farewell email to her MassWildlife colleagues, "whether it was in law enforcement, working with educators and volunteers, outreach to different audiences, media relations, publications, [or] other communications efforts, the common thread was education."

MassWildlife has benefited greatly from Marion's natural curiosity and affinity for education; her extended network of colleague-friends that kept her up to date on conservation matters across the state; and her accessible, easy-going manner with constituents and members of the public. Marion received a Commonwealth of Massachusetts Citation for

Outstanding Performance in 2000 and she was recently honored with a career recognition award by the Worcester County League of Sportsmen and the Lillian Gribbons Award by the Massachusetts Sportsmen's Council.

Best wishes from all of us on your retirement, Marion – on to your next great adventure!