



# NEW ENGLAND BACKCOUNTRY HUNTERS AND ANGLERS

March 20, 2021

Wareham Board of Selectmen  
54 Marion Road Wareham, MA 02571  
Attn: Peter Teitelbaum, Esq., Chair

Re: Proposed Zoning Change to create a Wareham Hospitality, Recreation and Entertainment District

Dear Chairman Teitelbaum and Members of the Wareham Board of Selectmen:

As the fastest growing organization of hunters and anglers in the nation, Backcountry Hunters & Anglers (BHA) seeks to ensure North America's outdoor heritage of hunting and fishing in a natural setting. BHA supports the North American Wildlife Conservation Model, which is based on the premise that wildlife is a public trust resource that should be scientifically managed and enjoyed by all Americans. Protecting and enhancing access and opportunity to public lands and waters and sound management of wildlife and wildlife habitats are top priorities to our members, and we actively strive to be a voice for wildlife and to ensure America's public lands legacy.

With these things in mind, BHA has significant concerns related to the rezoning of the 1,000-acre parcel of land in close proximity to Red Brook into a Hospitality, Recreation and Entertainment District. Development of this type jeopardizes a complex ecological system that extends far beyond the acreage in question and compromises vital habitat and ecological services critical to wildlife and humans alike.

A significant portion of the proposed development site consists of Pine Barrens, a globally rare habitat. In fact, the property and adjacent conservation and state land creates one of the two largest remaining tracts of pine barrens on the planet. The State of Massachusetts has designated the area as a Priority Habitat, Core Habitat, and Critical Natural Landscape. It's truly a unique system, and flora and fauna that call this place home reflect this fact. From the endangered Barrens Tiger beetle to the Prairie Warbler, this area has species that are found nowhere else in Massachusetts.

Of particular concern to our members, is the impact the proposed development would have on the unique fishery that exists in Red Brook. Millions of dollars and tens of thousands of hours from volunteers have been invested by a number of stakeholder organizations, including the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife to protect and restore this fish habitat. As a result of these efforts, Red Brook is unique among coastal rivers, as it supports anadromous fish populations. Sea-Run Brook Trout, also known as Salters, were once abundant in New England coastal rivers, but today they are only found in a few remaining systems, one of which is Red Brook. In addition, Alewife, Blueback Herring, and American Eel also utilize the brook as a necessary part of their lifecycle. The unique characteristics of the river and its clean, cool spring-fed water is essential for the preservation of these fisheries.

Ultimately, the rezoning of the parcel of land into a Hospitality, Recreation and Entertainment District and the potential development that would follow would create a cascade of negative impacts on a rare and sensitive system. The clearing of Pine Barrens habitat will undoubtedly destroy rare and endangered flora and fauna, and further shrink this globally rare habitat. The density of the development would strain water resources, reducing the volume and changing its chemistry, effectively altering the lifeblood of Red Brook. It is for these reasons, and others that Backcountry Hunters and Anglers opposes Wareham's proposed rezoning of this property.

If you have questions, please contact us at [massachusetts@backcountryhunters.org](mailto:massachusetts@backcountryhunters.org). Thank you for your consideration.



Christopher Borgatti  
Massachusetts State Leadership Team  
New England Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers