



For immediate release
November 24, 2008

Contact: Wendy Fox
617-626-1453

DCR PARTNERS WITH EASTHAMPTON HIGH SCHOOL TO CONSTRUCT PARK PASSPORT BOXES

Students will build and paint wooden boxes for the popular new parks program

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) has entered into a partnership with Easthampton High School in Easthampton to create the colorful boxes that contain passport stamps for DCR's new Park Passport Program at DCR properties across the Commonwealth.

Under the partnership, DCR will provide materials for the boxes, and woodworking, art, and metal-working students at Easthampton High School will build and paint the boxes under the direction of their teachers. DCR is encouraging the students to sign or personally mark the boxes they create to document their participation in the program.

"These young people are the next generation of environmental stewards, and DCR is delighted to be partnering with them as they become involved in the state park system," said DCR Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr. "This partnership is a win-win situation for both DCR and the high school students: DCR will be the beneficiary of a number of new boxes, and the students will have engaged in public service by creating a quality product that will be used by and for the public."

Last June, DCR launched the Park Passport Program in 76 state parks across the Commonwealth, from Boston to the Berkshires. Since then, the program has been extremely successful: More than 25,000 Passports have been distributed to the public, and the DCR team that designed and started the program won the 2008 Manuel Carballo Governor's Award for excellence in public service.

The free Park Passport Program is aimed at getting children and their families out into the great outdoors, and is open to anyone who visits one of DCR's participating parks. In each park, visitors locate the park-specific stamp inside a "passport box," and stamp their passport documenting their visit to that park. Each stamp, designed by Massachusetts artist and children's illustrator Micha Archer, highlights a natural, recreational, or cultural feature of the park. Viewed as a whole, the 76 stamps show the diversity of the Massachusetts park system.

When students and faculty at Easthampton High School expressed interest in being involved in the program, DCR agreed to supply materials and let the high school students build and paint

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS · EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

Department of Conservation and Recreation
251 Causeway Street, Suite 600
Boston MA 02114-2119
617-626-1250 617-626-1351 Fax
www.mass.gov/dcr



Deval L. Patrick
Governor

Timothy P. Murray
Lt. Governor

Ian A. Bowles, Secretary, Executive
Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs

Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., Commissioner
Department of Conservation & Recreation

the boxes at no cost to the agency. Currently, the project involves students in wood-working, art, and metal-working classes.

“The passport box is one of the main components of the program,” said DCR Ranger Peter Michaels, manager of the Park Passport Program. The original 76 boxes were constructed by DCR staff members at Skinner State Park in Hadley, and the Easthampton students are producing boxes to go in additional parks as they are added to the program and replacement boxes for any that are damaged.

“We are happy to be involved in this project,” said Easthampton High School Principal Jeffrey Sealander. “We’ve already introduced the idea here among our department chairpersons of expanding this to have a school-wide focus. We’re trying to bring in some math and writing, as well as possibly some work on the history of the state parks and even the national parks.”

"Providing support for a project of this nature is what teaching and learning is all about," said woodworking teacher Charles Revord, a team leader in the high school's technology department. "I'm excited about the high school's involvement because students need to be active learners in today's society, and what better way for them to achieve this standard than to provide Passport boxes for a worthwhile, statewide, DCR initiative."

For more information on the Park Passport Program, and to order a Passport, visit DCR's website: www.mass.gov/dcr. To discuss setting up a similar partnership between a school or other group and DCR, call DCR's office of partnerships, 617-626-4964.

###

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), an agency of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, oversees 450,000 acres of parks and forests, beaches, bike trails, watersheds, and dams, in addition to 278 bridges and miles of roadways. Led by Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr., the agency's mission is to protect, promote, and enhance our common wealth of natural, cultural, and recreational resources. To learn more about DCR, our facilities, and our programs, please visit www.mass.gov/dcr. Contact us at mass.parks@state.ma.us.