

Forest Management Planning

Policy: It is the policy of the Department of Conservation and Recreation, to complete land management plans for all Division of State Parks and Recreation (DSPR) lands. The purpose of these plans are to:

- Develop long-term strategy (105 years) for the management of the DSPR lands.
- Develop short-term (next 15 years) implementation schedules to meet the desired conditions of the forest plans.
- Provide resource management implementation and monitoring.
- Meet Forest Stewardship Council green certification standards.

These plans are needed to:

- Meet the Commonwealth of Massachusetts forest management legal mandates and strategic goals and objectives.
- Address the natural resource management issues identified by the public
- Inform the public on how the DSPR lands shall be managed.
- Provide comprehensive long-term forest management guidance and specific short-term implementation and monitoring direction to land managers.
- Integrate all resources such as vegetation, wildlife, rare plants and animals, soils and water, recreation, cultural resources and infrastructure into a comprehensive land management strategy.

These plans are to be prepared based on the following planning principles:

- The forest plans will consider the larger landscape scale patterns, and surrounding activities.
- The forest plans will be adaptable and change over time as new biological and social conditions and information becomes available.
- The forest plans will consider ecological, social, and economic factors to determine how best to manage the natural resources.
- Resource management will be biologically and economically sustainable and environmentally sensitive.
- The forest plans will be focused on providing clear strategic, implementation, and monitoring direction.
- The forest plans will describe key present conditions, desired conditions, goals, and objectives.
- Forest management shall be according to sound silvicultural practices and in consideration of ecological principles.
- The forest plans will be developed with the best information and data available.

Forest Plan Implementation

Policy: It is the policy of the Bureau of Forestry to base management and project identification on the most recent forest plans. Forest plans will be fully implemented within budgetary and resource constraints

Plan Process and Outline

The planning process is based on the idea of focusing down in scale, both in a physical and policy sense, in a series of steps. Overall the plan starts at the statewide policy scale reviewing the statutes, enabling legislation, and certification requirements. The plan then reviews the public issues and opportunities that were identified for the Central Berkshire Highland Ecoregion. These issues and opportunities are important as the lands covered in this plan provide opportunities to partially or fully meet these public needs. After this section the specific DCR DSPR lands in the Central Berkshire District are introduced. This section contains the most detailed information and all of the management guidelines for the district foresters. Following this section are the societal and policy sections consisting of forest products, inventory, monitoring, and evaluation, and public involvement. Although these sections also provide program guidance they do not follow the format of the district section detailed below.

District Section

The district section follows uses a filtering approach to identify management restrictions and the lands to which they apply. By applying the most restrictive filters first, the manager can identify the management guidelines that should be applied to any given area. The first step is to filter and identify lands that will be placed in the small and large reserve systems. These areas have the most restrictive management guidelines which can be found under the reserve subsection.

The remaining lands are again filtered to identify special management areas, that while not in reserve status, still have a more restrictive set of guidelines for management. The guidelines for these lands are found under the special management area sub-section.

The remaining lands that were not identified in these first two steps are the general natural resource areas. These are the lands that are open to the widest range of management options. They are managed to meet specific resource goal and they information and guidance for these lands are presented in eight resource sections. Each resource section provides information on the *present condition*, the *desired future condition*, and the *management guidelines and opportunities* that will be followed to reach this desired future condition.

Present Condition

Each resource section under the general natural resource areas sub-section starts with a presentation of the existing condition. The existing condition information provides

baseline information on the resource in text and/or table form. It is also where the map references may be found.

Desired Future Condition

The desired future condition is a general goal statement describing the resource condition achieved by full implementation of this and future plans.

Management Guidelines and Opportunities

One of the most important outputs of the planning process is the management guidelines. Management guidelines are the means by which the desired future conditions will be created. Each management guideline is associated with a broader resource topic or land use. They may be found under the reserve and special management areas section and in the general natural resource areas sub-section, the management guidelines are listed under the ten resource sections. The management guidelines are what the foresters will use to prioritize, and implement management on the ground. By following all the management guidelines the district forester can ensure that his or her daily work is based on the planning framework and fits into the larger landscape and regional issues. Although the plan provides flexibility for on the ground decisions, the management guidelines serve as a check to meet the goals set forth in this plan.

Maps

Most of the plan sections have maps that support the text information. Most maps are followed by a supporting table that presents the same information in a table format. District level maps display information on a landscape or district level. These maps are found in the first appendix and when they are referenced a DL appears before the map number. Property level maps display maps on a property level or management unit level (an administrative grouping of properties). Property level maps appear in the four management unit appendices (appendices B through E).

Intended Users

This plan is meant to be used by several different audiences. User groups might be most interested in the larger district issues and the resource guidelines. Individual may want to look more closely at the property level. While this is a public document and heavily based on public comment, its ultimate use is in the implementation phase carried out by the district forester. The district forester will use this plan to target workloads to areas that have been identified as most appropriate for meeting the goals of this plan. The value of this plan will ultimately be judged by the careful and responsible implementation by the foresters and natural resource managers who are the stewards of the valuable public resources held and managed in their trust.