

Middlesex Fells Reservation Resource Management Plan



*Something like five miles northerly
from Boston lies a great tract of
country, all stony hills and table-
lands, almost uninhabited, and of
wonderful picturesqueness, and
wild rugged beauty.*

- Sylvester Baxter, Boston Herald Supplement,
December 6, 1879

DCR Public Meeting

January 31, 2011, 6:30 p.m. – 8 p.m.
McGlynn Middle School, Medford



Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Governor

Deval L. Patrick

Lieutenant Governor

Timothy Murray

Energy and Environmental Secretary

Richard K. Sullivan, Jr.

Department of Conservation and Recreation Commissioner

John P. Murray, Acting Commissioner

DCR Mission Statement



To protect, promote and enhance our common wealth of natural, cultural and recreational resources.

Tonight's Meeting



- Presentation
 - Background on DCR Resource Management Plans
 - Middlesex Fells Reservation Resource Management Plan Process
- Public Input

RMP Requirements

Management plans are prepared for “all reservations, parks, and forests under the management of the department”

M.G.L. Chapter 21; Section 2F



Virginia Wood History Trail

RMP Requirements



Wild Columbine

“shall include guidelines for the operation and land stewardship of...reservations, parks and forests”

“shall provide for the protection and stewardship of natural and cultural resources”

“shall ensure consistency between recreation, resource protection and sustainable forest management”

M.G.L. Chapter 21; Section 2F

Prioritizing Planning Needs



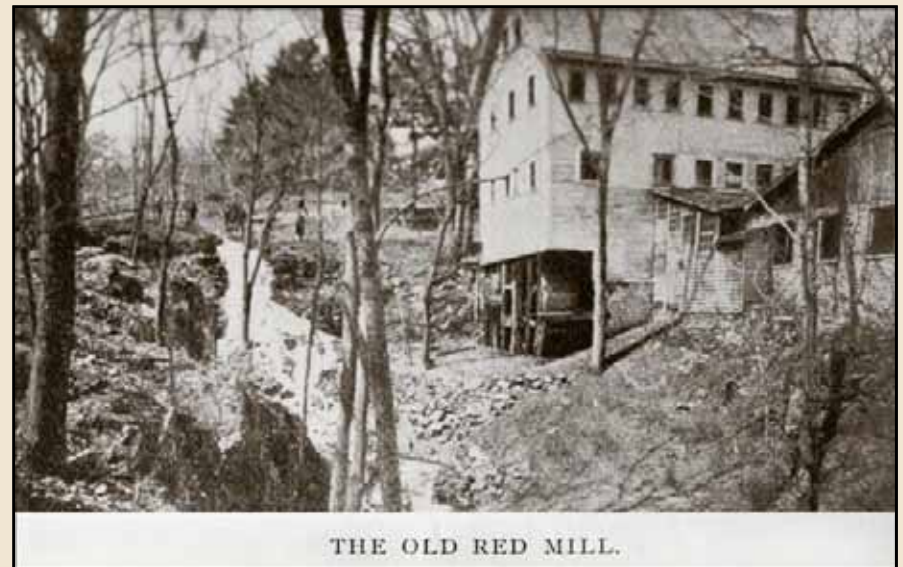
- Statewide analysis of planning need
- 385 DCR properties (owned outright or legal interest)
- 80 planning units
- Evaluated natural resources, cultural resources, recreation activities and management considerations

Resource Management Plans (RMPs):

- Are working documents that consider the past, present and future of a property
- Provide a guide to the short and long-term management of properties under the stewardship of the DCR
- Set priorities for capital and operating budgets, and resource allocation
- Enhance communication and cooperation with visitors, partners and surrounding communities

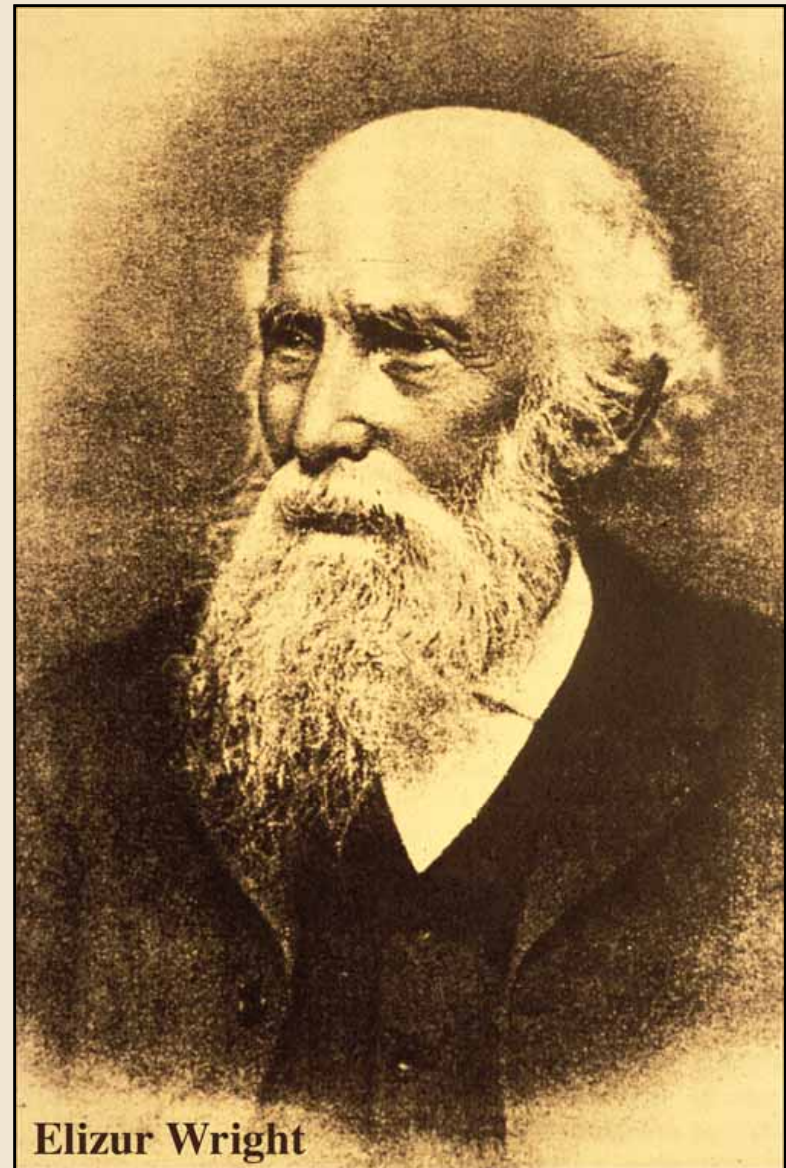
Middlesex Fells Historical Background

- Underlying geology and glaciers shape the Fells landscape
- ~12,000 BP – Present: Native American land use
- 1660 – 1890: the area was settled, subdivided, cleared and developed for industry, agriculture and residence



Middlesex Fells Historical Background

- Underlying geology and glaciers shape the Fells landscape
- ~12,000 BP – Present: Native American land use
- 1660 – 1890: the area was settled, subdivided, cleared and developed for industry, agriculture and residence
- 1892 Virginia Wood was donated to the Trustees of Reservations as public open space



Elizur Wright



North Reservoir, 1895, Nathaniel Stebbins



Middlesex Fells Historical Background

- 1893 the Metropolitan Parks Commission was established

Acts of 1893, Chap. 407

Section 4: Said board shall have the power to acquire, maintain and make available to the inhabitants of said district open spaces for exercise and recreation.

Middlesex Fells Historical Background



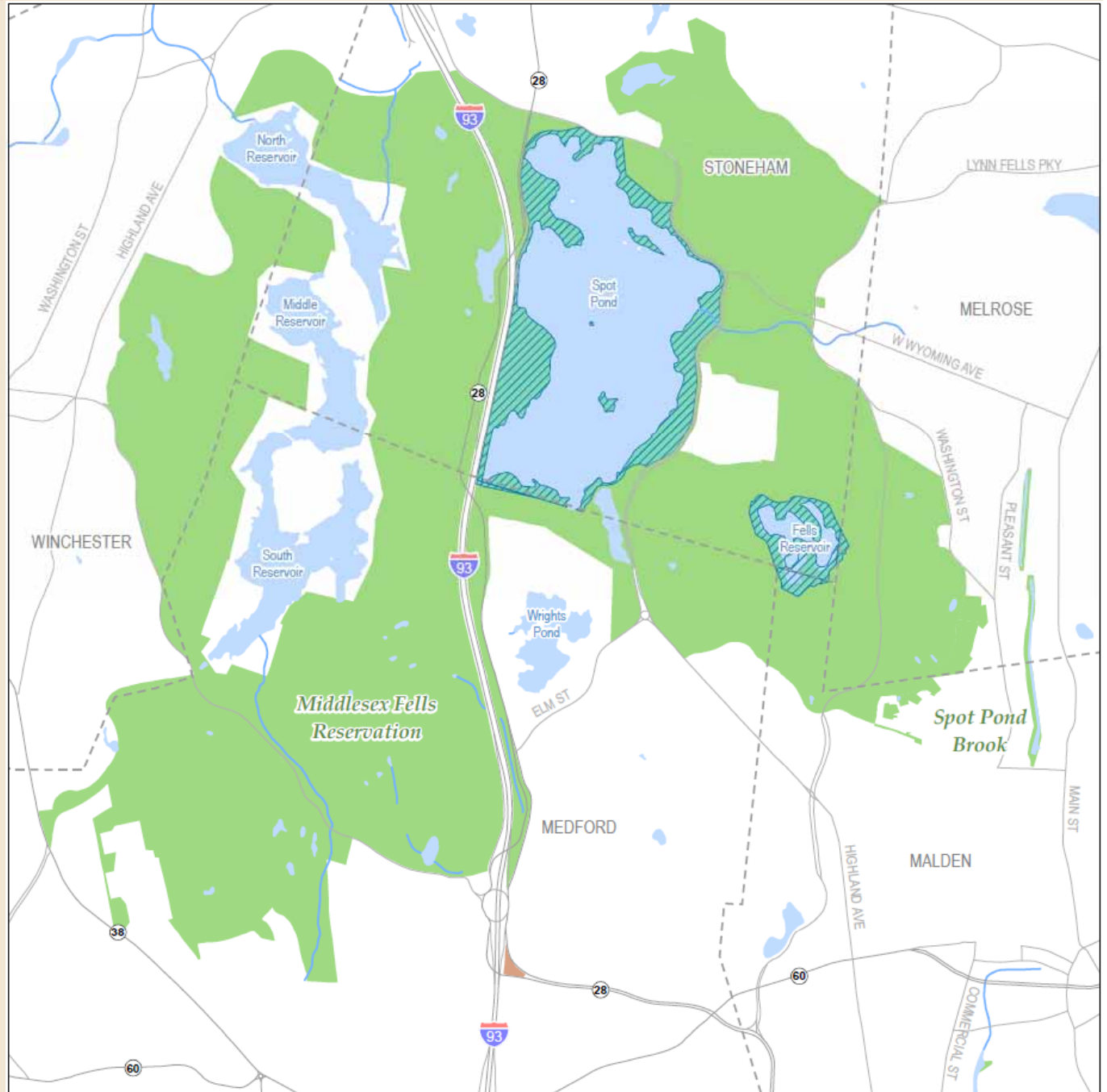
Middlesex Fells Historical Background

- 1894 nearly 1,600 acres of the Fells had been protected
- Early 1900s the Fells were managed to create a variety of uses and landscapes
- 1930s brought additional improvements through the CCC and WPA
- 1950s – 1960s saw increased development of recreational amenities and transportation infrastructure





Middlesex Fells Reservation Planning Unit



Legend:

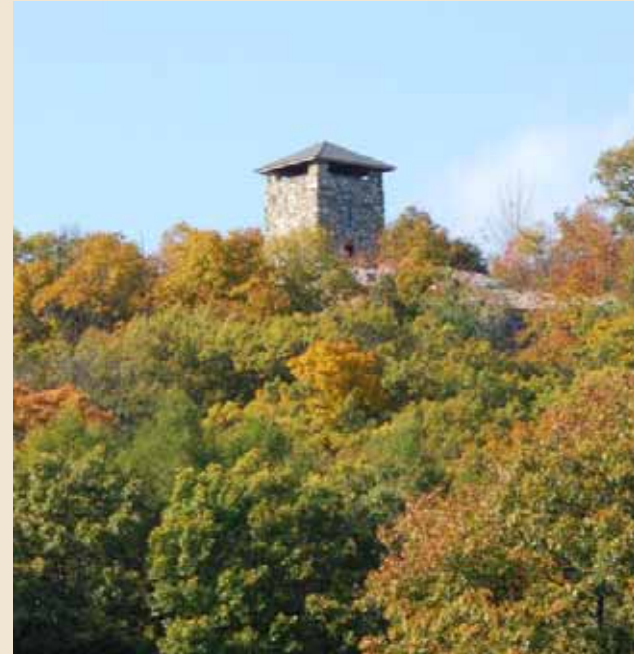
- Major Road
- Minor Road
- Town Boundary
- Perennial Stream
- Open Water
- Other Legal Interest (MWRA)
- DCR (Urban Parks and Recreation)
- DCR (Water Supply Protection)
- MassDOT (DCR Care and Control)

0 0.5 1 Mile

Geographic data provided by the Office of Geographic and Environmental Information (MassGIS).

Middlesex Fells Reservation

- Features
 - 2,575 acres of protected open space
 - Public water supply lands
 - Over 120 miles of trails
 - Diverse natural plant communities
 - Nine rare species
 - Important Bird Area
 - Rocky outcrops and summits
 - Historic buildings, towers and sites
 - Over 100 vernal pools
 - Sheepfold meadow
 - Spot Pond
 - Flynn Rink
 - Stone Zoo



Wright's Tower

“The landscape pleases chiefly by reason of the intimate mingling of many types of scenery and objects of interest. Here is a cliff and a cascade, here a pool, pond or stream, here a surprising glimpse of a fragment of blue ocean, or again a faint blue vision of a far distant mountain.”

Boston Parks Guide, by Sylvester Baxter

Middlesex Fells Reservation

- Visitor Activities
 - Hiking / walking
 - Dog walking
 - Mountain biking
 - Running
 - Skiing
 - Scenic driving
 - Nature observation
 - Boating
 - Fishing
 - Orienteering



Sheepfold Meadow photo by David Monahan

Management Challenges

- Enforcing regulations
- Managing the recreational trail system and trail uses
- Infrastructure Maintenance
- Protecting and maintaining priority species and habitats
- Protecting water supplies
- Limited staff resources



RMP Contents

- Management Principle and Goals



Ridge Top Natural Plant Community



Reservoir and Mountain Bike Loop Trails

RMP Contents

- Management Goals
- Existing Conditions
 - **Natural Resources**



Virginia Wood



Wooded Marsh

RMP Contents

- Management Goals
- Existing Conditions
 - Natural Resources
 - **Cultural Resources**



Haywardville (now Virginia Wood)



Botume House



View from Wright's Tower

RMP Contents

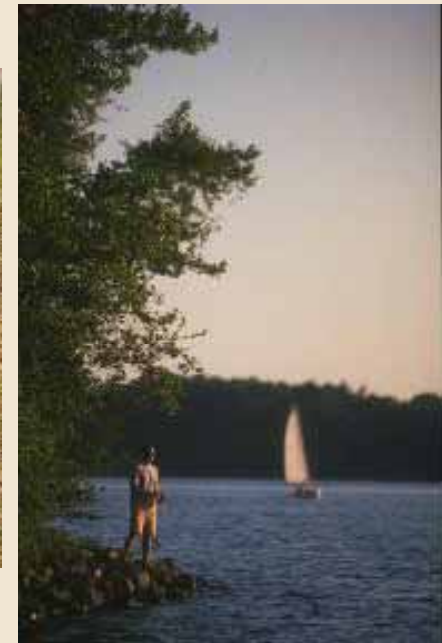
- Management Goals
- Existing Conditions
 - Natural Resources
 - Cultural Resources
 - **Recreational Resources**



Recreating with Family Dogs



Family Recreation, photo courtesy of NEMBA



Enjoying Spot Pond

RMP Contents

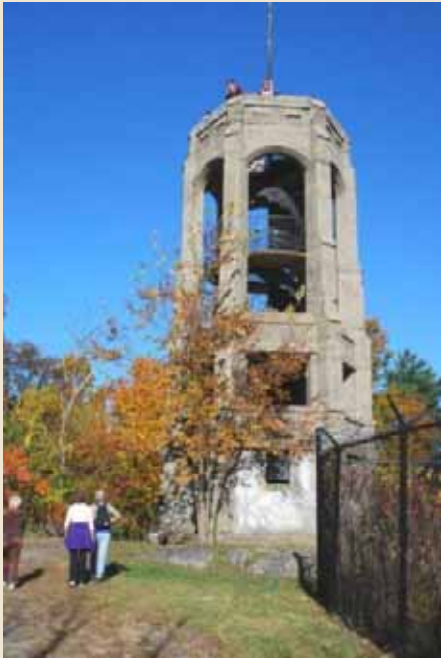
- Management Goals
- Existing Conditions
 - Natural Resources
 - Cultural Resources
 - Recreational Resources
 - **Interpretive and Ranger Services**



Ranger Program



Interpretive Signage



Bear Hill Tower



Erosion on the Skyline Trail

RMP Contents

- Management Goals
- Existing Conditions
 - Natural Resources
 - Cultural Resources
 - Recreational Resources
 - Interpretive Services
 - **Operational and Facility Management**

RMP Contents



Land Stewardship Zoning Map

- Management Goals
- Existing Conditions
- **Land Stewardship Zoning**

RMP Contents



Hikers on the Skyline Trail



Ridgetop Pitch Pine Scrub Oak Community

- Management Goals
- Existing Conditions
- Land Stewardship Zoning
- Management Recommendations

Status of the Middlesex Fells Trail Plan

- The RMP builds on the past work of the Trail Plan
- Trail Plan will be held as Draft until the completion of the RMP
- Revision may occur to the final trail plan component through the ongoing RMP planning process



Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation
Bureau of Planning and Resource Protection
Greenways and Trails Program

TRAIL SYSTEM PLAN

DCR

Middlesex Fells Reservation



Time Frame*

January 31, 2011- Initial Public Meeting on RMP process

January 31 to March 30 - Initial Public Input Solicited

February 9 to mid-March – Public Informational Workshops

May 2011 – Public Meeting and Release of Draft RMP

May and June – 30 Day Public Comment Period

June 2011- Final Draft Plan posted, and submitted to DCR
Stewardship Council for review and adoption

July 2011- Announce posting of Final RMP on DCR website

* Dates subject to change

Public Informational Workshops

February 2 –	Postponed
February 9 –	Flora and Fauna
February 17 –	Wetlands and Water Resources
February 23 –	Cultural Resources
March 2 –	Recreational Resources Workshop
March 16 –	Education and Interpretation
March 23 –	Enforcement

Public Informational Workshops

Flora and Fauna Workshop

Wednesday, February 9, 2011

6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Botume House

4 Woodland Road, Stoneham

Welcome

Presentations

- Bryan Hamlin and Walter Kittredge (Botanists)
- David Brown (Wildlife Naturalist),
- Wayne Petersen (MAS Important Bird Areas Program)
- Lynn Harper (Massachusetts Natural Heritage Program)

Questions, answers and discussion

Public Input



- RMP Questions?
- Management Principle and Goals
- Natural Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Recreational Resources
- Interpretive and Ranger Services
- Operational & Facility Management
- Other

Additional Information



Photos courtesy of Jack Boudreau, DCR archives, Bryan Hamlin, Paul Jahnige, NEMBA, and Mike Ryan.

For more information please visit the DCR web site:

<http://www.mass.gov/dcr/news/publicmeetings/rmppast.htm>

DCR invites input, comments or suggestions:

- E-mail:

MiddlesexFellsRMP@umb.edu

Middlesex Fells RMP Comments
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