

Myles Standish State Forest Resource Management Plan

Resource Management Plans

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) is directed by a legislative mandate (M.G.L. Chapter 21, Section 2F) to prepare management plans for every DCR reservation, park and forest, to provide management guidelines for the protection and stewardship of natural, cultural and recreational resources, and to ensure consistency between recreation, resource protection and sustainable forest management. The legislative mandate also requires the incorporation of public review and input into the development of management plans, and review and adoption by the DCR Stewardship Council.

Resource Management Plans (RMPs) consider the past, present, and future of a forest, park, or reservation. Through an assessment of resources, clear management goals are developed, and short- and long-term action plans are identified for the management of properties under the stewardship of the DCR. RMPs are written to meet the information needs of a diverse audience: from the decision-makers directly involved in the operation and management of a property, to a variety of outside stakeholders. RMPs are intended to be working documents for setting priorities, budgeting and resource allocation, and establishing guidelines for balancing sustainable recreation with the stewardship of natural and cultural resources. Finally, RMPs are of value to users who are interested in learning more about that property, the challenges it faces, and how decisions affecting it are made.

Myles Standish State Forest

Myles Standish State Forest, the largest public recreation area in southeastern Massachusetts, offers a variety of affordable opportunities for outdoor recreation on 12,410 acres of public land. Each year over 600,000 residents of densely populated eastern Massachusetts enjoy camping, swimming, fishing, biking, hiking, horseback riding, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing and hunting in the Forest. MSSF also contains one of the largest contiguous pitch pine/scrub oak communities north of Long Island. Ecologically significant coastal plain “Kettle” ponds are also scattered throughout the Forest.

Myles Standish State Forest is characterized by:

- Recreational opportunities offered by 13 miles of hiking trails, 15 miles of paved bike trails, and over 35 miles of equestrian trails
- 470 camp sites and 3 yurts around four ponds, including an equestrian camping area at Charge Pond
- A day use area at College Pond, offering swimming, canoeing, fishing, hiking, and picnicking
- 142 private cottages located on five ponds
- Several ponds stocked with game fish
- Hunting during the season, including two Wildlife Management Areas stocked with game birds
- 6,500 acres of pitch pine-scrub oak forest with 70 frost pockets
- 59 kettle hole ponds, many containing high quality coastal plain pond shore habitat
- 28 state-listed rare or endangered species
- Cultural resources left by Native American occupation, early colonial settlement, and Civilian Conservation Corps achievements
- Interpretive programs acquainting visitors with the unique natural and cultural heritage of the Forest

MSSF RMP Planning Process

Resource Management Plans are developed by the DCR's Resource Management Planning Program through an iterative process of data gathering and analyses, public input, review and revision. Administrative, ecological, recreational, cultural (i.e., archaeological and historic), demographic and spatial (i.e., mapping) information is gathered. Sources of information include interviews with DCR staff, site visits, administrative files and reports, legal documents, map data, and municipal and regional plans. An initial meeting is convened to provide the public with an opportunity to express their thoughts about the properties included in the RMP and to provide input into the plan's contents. The public meeting is announced in the Environmental Monitor and advertised in local media outlets.

A draft RMP is then prepared according to a standard format (see attached Table of Contents). A second public forum is then convened to present an overview of the RMP's findings and recommendations, and to solicit and record public comments. Once again, the public meeting is announced in the Environmental Monitor and advertised in local newspapers. The revised draft RMP is made available to the public via the DCR web site shortly after the public meeting. Comments received at the public forum and written comments received during a 60-day public comment period after the meeting are used to further develop the draft RMP.

Once revised, a final draft RMP is submitted to the Stewardship Council for review and adoption. The Stewardship Council is a 13-member citizen advisory board that works with the Department to provide a safe, accessible, well-maintained, and well-managed system of open spaces and recreational facilities that are managed and maintained on behalf of the public for the purposes of natural and cultural resource protection, sustainable recreation and education.

Once adopted, the Commissioner of the Department of Conservation and Recreation files copies of the RMP with the Secretary of State, and the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture of the Massachusetts General Court. The adopted RMP provides structure and guidance for the operation and management of properties included in the plan and ensures consistency between resource management, recreation and sustainable forest management.

Anticipated MSSF RMP Schedule

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| First DCR Public Forum | October 28, 2010 |
| Pineland, Plantations and Wildlife Management FMSSF Workshop | November 10, 2010 |
| Vernal Pools and Ponds Management FMSSF Workshop | November 17, 2010 |
| Cultural Resources and Interpretive Services FMSSF Workshop | December 2, 2010 |
| Recreational Resources FMSSF Workshop | January 6, 2011 |
| Infrastructure and Operations FMSSF Workshop | January 12, 2011 |
| Second DCR Public Forum on draft RMP | Early March 2011 |
| Public Comment Period Ends | 60-days after public forum |
| DCR Revision of Draft RMP | May 2011 |
| RMP submitted to DCR Stewardship Council for Review and Adoption | June 2011 |
| Announce Posting of Final RMP on DCR website | July 2011 |

RMP Table of Contents

Executive Summary

- Introduction
- Management Goals
- Priority Recommendations
- Action Plan

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- 1.1 DCR Mission
- 1.2 Introduction to Resource Manage Plans
- 1.3 The Planning Process
- 1.4 Public Participation in Preparing this RMP
- 1.5 Properties Included in this RMP
- 1.6 Defining Characteristics
- 1.7 Management Principle and Goals
- 1.8 Regional Context
- 1.9 History of Planning Unit

Section 2.0 Existing Conditions

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- 2.2 Natural Resources
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- 2.5 Interpretive Services and Environmental Education
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Section 3.0 Land Stewardship Zoning

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- 3.3 Land Stewardship Zoning Guidelines
- 3.4 Recommended Land Stewardship Zones

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