

Myles Standish State Forest - Resource Management Plan  
Public Meeting May 25, 2011  
Notes from Question and Answer / Public Comment Session

Q: What invasive plant species is located in the East Head Reservoir? What can the state do to treat the infestation?

A: East Head Reservoir is infested by *Cabomba caroliniana* (Carolina fanwort). There are usually poor results with mechanical removal. Since East Head Reservoir is owned by a private cranberry grower, DCR can provide technical assistance through its Lakes and Ponds program to prevent the spread of invasive aquatic plants to other ponds in MSSF.

C: Since fisherman travel between various ponds at MSSF, they can spread invasive plants from East Head Reservoir to other ponds.

Q: How are Landscape Designations integrated with Land Stewardship Zoning?

A: Landscape Designations will guide land use management activities based on a balance between conservation, recreation and forestry for properties throughout the DCR parks system. Land Stewardship Zoning is a finer level assessment applied at the property scale through the RMP process.

Q: How can the management recommendations be implemented given the decrease in DCR staff?

A: DCR will prioritize recommendations that do not require additional staff or can be implemented with assistance from local partners.

Q: What impact does DCR have over DFW management of the Wildlife Management Areas? DFW needs to reduce the number of trails and use native plants.

A: DCR will work with the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program to encourage the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife to adopt sustainable management practices.

C: For the safety of recreational users, DCR should avoid locating recreational facilities within sections of the forest used by hunters during the hunting season. Recreation users need to be educated about safety precautions during the hunting season (e.g. wearing orange clothing). Many recreational users are not aware of the spring hunting season.

C: DCR needs to provide recreational users information about the hunting season schedule and safety procedures during the hunting season. State law requires hunter orange clothing in areas where hunting is permitted.

C: Need more signage about the requirement to wear hunter orange during the hunting season.

C: The presentation did not list the Cottage Association as a partner. Cottage owner contributions should be listed in the presentation.

C: The GOALS Plan never mentioned the existence of cottages at MSSF. Given its 91 year history of service in the Forest, the Camp Program should be featured as a major partner. The Camp Association was formed 25 years ago at DEM's request to facilitate communications between DEM and the cottage owners. The RMP should document Camp Program contributions for the past 91 years. The Camp Program monitors ponds where DCR does not have any presence. Given recent DCR budget reductions, DCR needs Camp Program assistance to monitor activities in the Forest. The original permits were publicly advertised. The Camp Association offered to let DCR manage the sale of camps. Beginning in 2005, DCR forbid the sale of camps to new owners.

Q: DCR needs to increase the number of marked trails in the Forest. Are new trails allowed in Zone 1 areas?

A: New trails may be allowed in a Zone 1 after an evaluation of the need and avoidance of potential adverse impacts on identified sensitive resources.

C: The proposed Volunteer Guidelines are too restrictive. If the guidelines are too restrictive, volunteers will volunteer elsewhere. Given recent DCR budget cuts, it needs all of the volunteer help that it can get.

Q: Supports continuing the ban on Off Highway Vehicles. What is the Stewardship Council?

A: The Stewardship Council is a 13 member panel created by the legislation that merged DEM and MDC into DCR. The Council has the responsibility of reviewing and adopting all Resource Management Plans that are prepared for DCR forests, parks and reservations.

Q: There has been a decrease in law enforcement at both the state and local levels. Will this issue be addressed in the plan? How will DCR secure the Forest with fewer personnel?

A: Yes, security will be addressed in the RMP. DCR will rely on the Park Watch Program to report issues. DCR Rangers will work with State, Environmental and Local Police to secure the Forest.

C: Concerned that DCR not reduce equestrian trails or camping facilities in the Forest. DCR should continue to provide opportunities for horseback riding in MSSF.

Q: Given the delay in issuing a draft RMP, will the public comment period be extended?

A: The 60 day public comment period will begin after the draft RMP is available to the public.

Q: How much time does the Nature Conservancy have to submit comments on the proposed Land Stewardship Zoning map before the draft RMP is issued.

A: Comments within two weeks would be most effective.

C: Senator Murray appreciates DCR staff responsiveness and taking public comments during preparation of the RMP. Senator Murray is aware of the lack of financial resources to operate MSSF.

C: The cottage owners were upset that the GOALS Plan ignored the cottages. The owners worked hard to provide information about the Cottage Program to the RMP Planners. The Cottage Program needs to be addressed in the RMP. DCR should acknowledge contributions made by the cottage owners over the past 91 years. The RMP should determine whether the services provided by the Cottage Program are needed in the future.