

Walden Pond State Reservation Resource Management Plan and Visitor Services Master Plan



DCR Public Meeting

December 8, 2010

7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Concord Town House



Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Governor

Deval L. Patrick

Lieutenant Governor

Timothy Murray

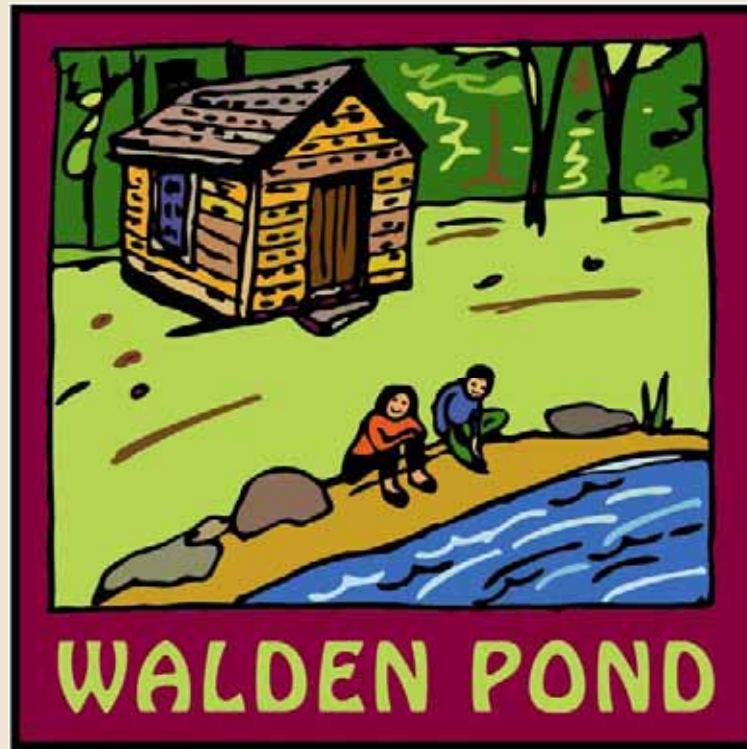
Energy and Environmental Secretary

Ian A. Bowles

Department of Conservation and Recreation Commissioner

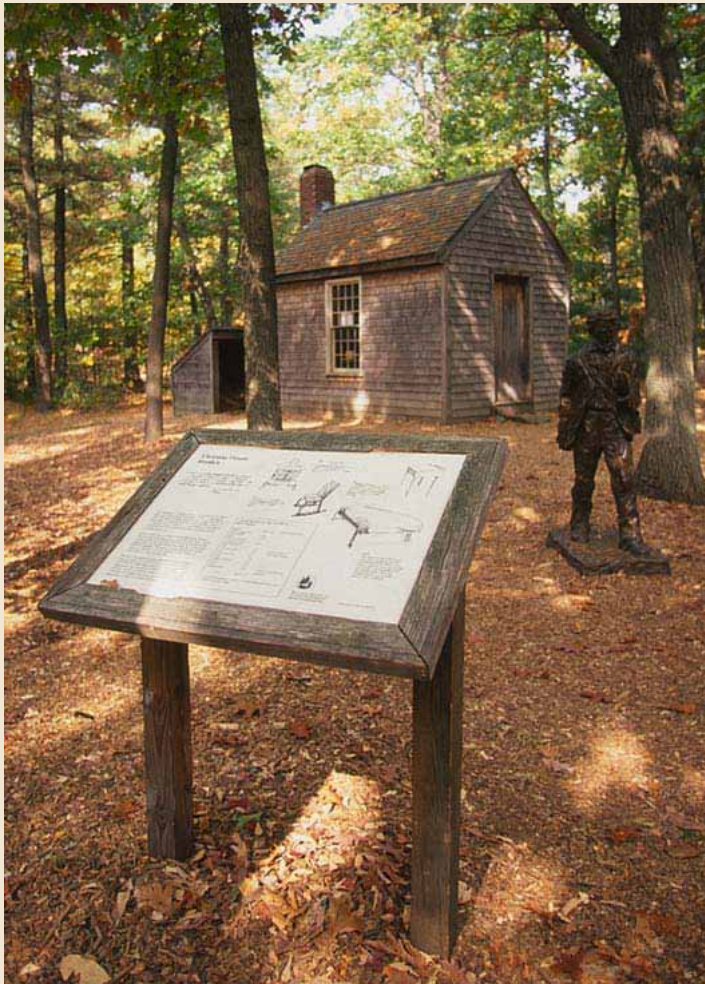
Richard K. Sullivan, Jr.

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
 - Walden Pond State Reservation Resource Management Plan
 - Visitor Services Master Plan
- 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



RMP Requirements



“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

Walden Historical Background (1)

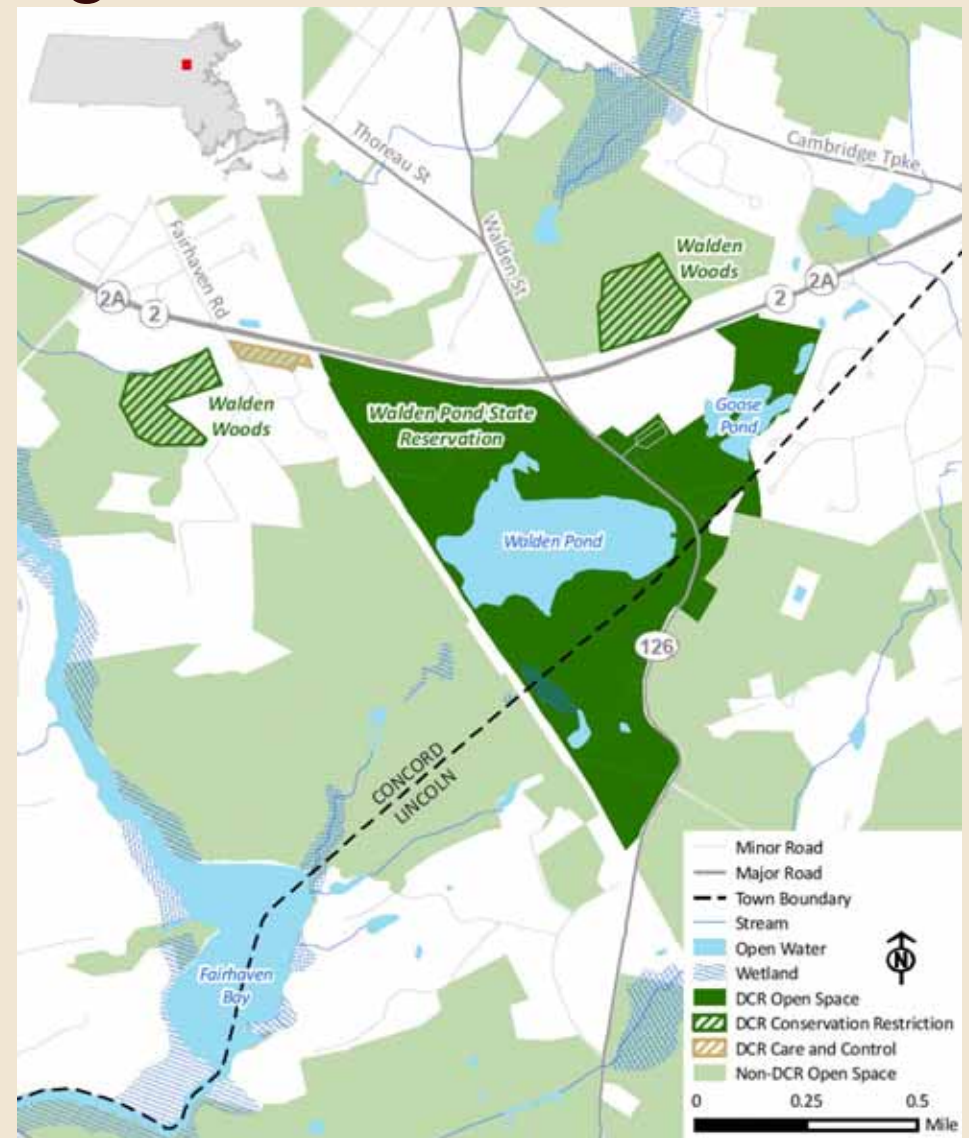
- ~15,000 BP: Glacial kettle hole pond is formed
- ~12,000 BP to *European contact*: Native American land use
- 1635: Concord incorporated, 1754: Lincoln incorporated
- *Late-1700s – mid-1800s*: Community of freed slaves established in the Walden Woods area
- 1844: Railroad corridor established adjacent to Walden Pond
- *July 1845 – September 1847*: Henry David Thoreau lives at Walden Pond
- 1854: *Walden; or Life in the Woods* is published
- *Mid to late-1800s*: Pond is used for ice production
- 1867: Fitchburg Railroad operates an ‘excursion park’ at Ice Fort Cove

Walden Historical Background (2)

- *1700s, 1800s and early-1900s*: land under private ownership, including ownership by Ralph Waldo Emerson and family heirs
- *1917*: Bathhouse established at main beach for swimmers
- *1922*: Walden Pond State Reservation donated to the Commonwealth for public enjoyment, managed from 1922 – 1974 by Middlesex County
- *1941*: Thoreau Society founded
- *1946*: Current bathhouse and concrete pier constructed
- *1965*: National Historic Landmark designation
- *1974*: Walden Advisory Board established by Act of Legislature
- *1974 to 2010*: Reservation managed by DCR and predecessor agencies (DEM, DNR)

Walden Pond State Reservation Planning Unit

- Covers 376 acres in Concord and Lincoln
- Includes two parcels totaling 36 acres (Conservation Restrictions)
- Walden Pond – glacial kettle hole with surface area of 60 acres
- Part of a larger system of protected conservation lands



Walden Pond State Reservation Planning Unit

- Facilities
 - Headquarters / gift store
 - 350-space parking lots
 - Beach & bathhouse
 - Picnic area
 - 1.8-mile pond perimeter trail and 7 additional miles of trail
 - Boat ramp with small parking area that also provides accessibility to the pondshore
 - Garage and maintenance structures
 - State Police stables
 - Thoreau replica cabin



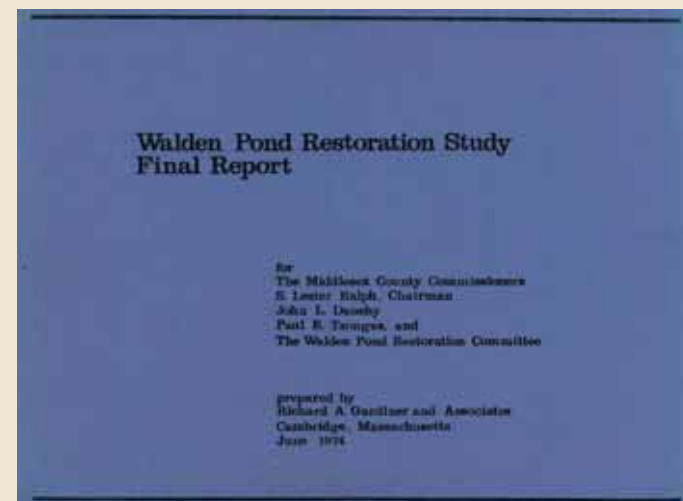
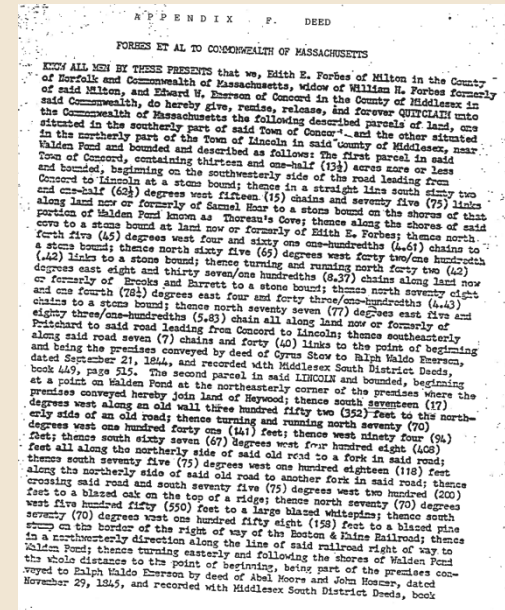
Walden Pond State Reservation Planning Unit

- Visitor Activities
 - Swimming
 - Picnicking
 - Boating (sailboats, gas motors prohibited)
 - Non-motorized trail use
 - Fishing
 - Historical / cultural exploration
 - Average annual attendance one-half million



Considerations for Ongoing Management

- Compliance with provisions in 1922 transfer to public ownership
 - Four identified recreation activities (boating, bathing, fishing, and picnicking)
- Limits on visitation from 1974 Gardiner Report
 - “1,000-people-at-one-time” limit
 - Administered by closure at full parking lot capacity
- New Visitor Center
 - Need identified in previous planning efforts (1974 Gardiner Report and 1993 DEM GOALS plan)



Management Challenges

- External access to the Reservation
- Access / circulation within the Reservation
 - Universal accessibility improvements
 - Integration of former trailer park
 - Plan for occasional high water
 - Safe crossing of Route 126
- Visitor capacity / Resource stewardship
- Balancing the variety of recreational activities



RMP Contents



- Management Goals
- Existing Conditions
 - Natural Resources
 - Cultural Resources
 - Recreational Resources
 - Interpretive Services
 - Operational and Facility Management
- Land Stewardship Zoning
- Management Recommendations

Visitor Services Master Plan



- Internal access / visitor circulation, including reuse of former trailer park
- Universal accessibility improvements
- Visitor Center location, conceptual site design, building program
- Identify Walden's niche for visitor services, complementary to area attractions

Time Frame

December 8, 2010

1st Public Forum on RMP / MP process
and public Input

April 2011

2nd Public Forum on Draft RMP / MP

July 2011

Final Visitor Services Master Plan

September 2011

Final public meeting (RMP)

- Final Draft Plan posted on DCR website

- Submitted to DCR Stewardship Council for
review and adoption

Fall 2011

Post Final RMP on DCR website

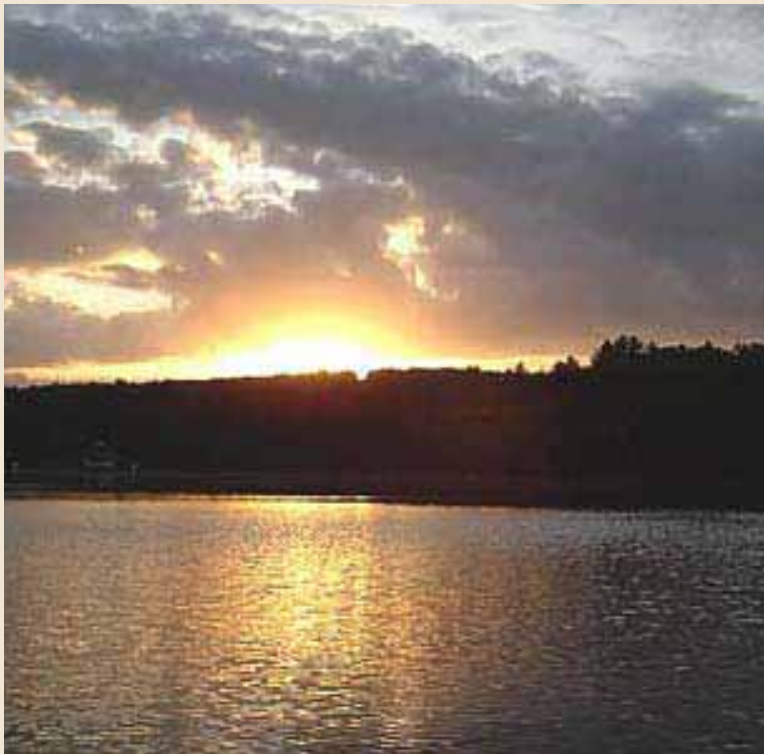
Dates subject to change



Public Input

- RMP / MP Questions?
- Natural Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Recreational Resources
- Operational & Facility Management
- Visitor Center / Visitor Services
- Other

Additional Information



For more information please visit
the DCR web site:

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

If you have questions, comments
or suggestions:

- E-mail:
rmp.comments@state.ma.us
- Place “Walden” in subject line