

Wachusett Reservoir Watershed Public Access Plan Update



DCR Public Meeting

May 3, 2011 7:00 p.m.
DCR Headquarters
180 Beaman Street, West Boylston



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

Edward M. Lambert, Jr.



DCR Division of Water Supply Protection Mission Statement

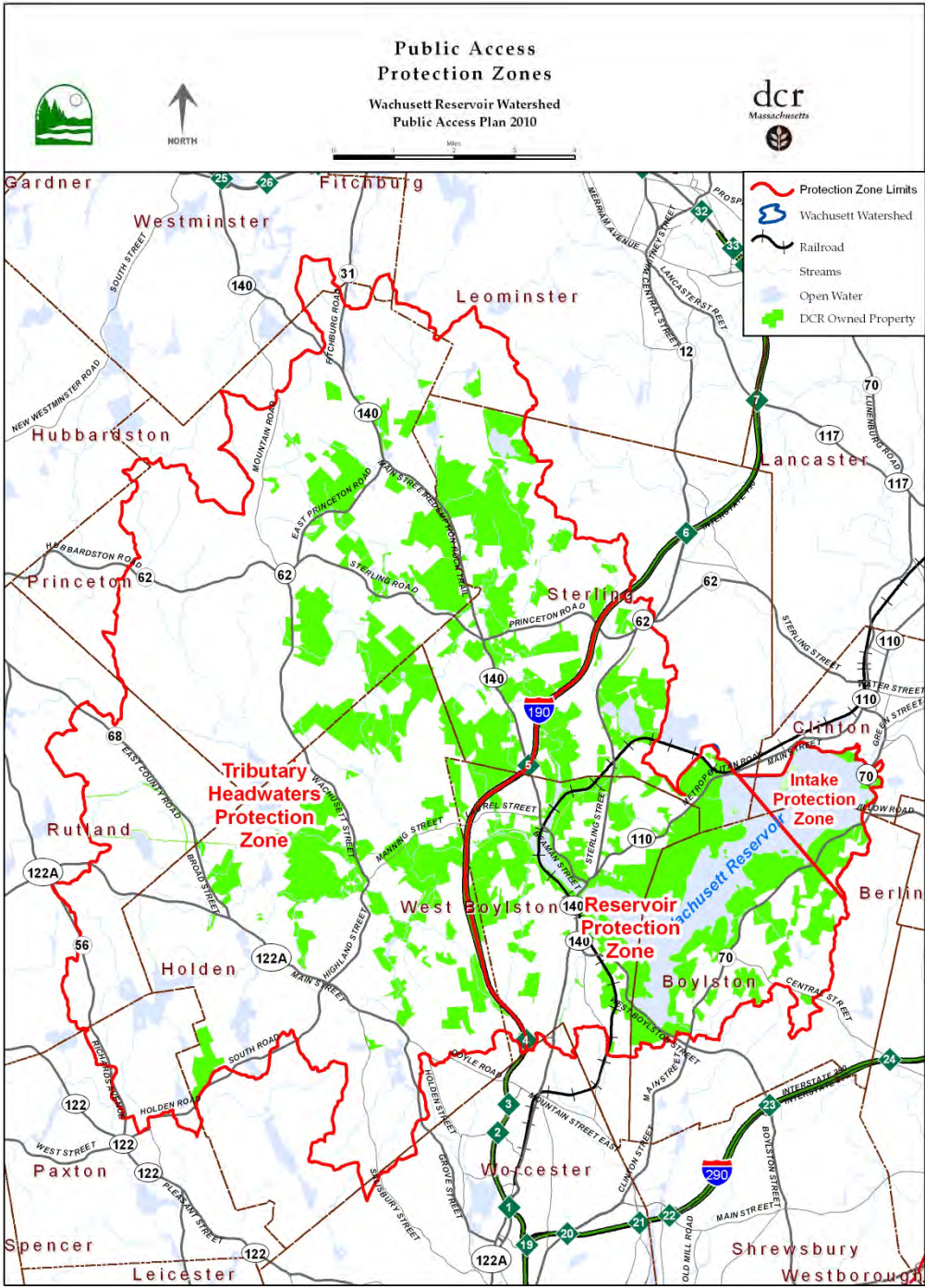
...construct, maintain and operate a system of watersheds, reservoirs, water rights and rights in sources of water supply [to] supply thereby a sufficient supply of pure water to the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority, and [to] utilize and conserve said water and other natural resources to protect, preserve and enhance the environment of the Commonwealth and to assure availability of pure water for future generations.

Wachusett Public Access Planning

- Public access rules and signage have existed for decades
- First Public Access Plan in 1996
- Plan Updated in 2003
- 2011 Plan Update

Wachusett Public Access Planning

- Watershed divided into zones based upon proximity to Intake Facility.
 - Intake Protection Zone
 - Reservoir Protection Zone (formerly designated as Reservoir and Tributary Shoreline Zone)
 - Tributary Headwaters Protection Zone



2011 Public Access Plan Update Activity and Process

- October 28, 2010: Public “kick off” meeting and survey announcement
 - 14 people in attendance, including local media
- Fall/Winter: Draft Public Access Plan developed
- January 15, 2011: Public Survey Closed
- April 2011: DRAFT Public Access Plan complete
- May 3, 2011: Public Meeting on DRAFT Public Access Plan
- May 20, 2011: Comments on DRAFT Plan due
- July 1, 2011: 2011 Public Access Plan Implementation**

Survey

Online survey was made available through SurveyMonkey

The survey website link was available through:	Paper copies of the survey were available at:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Watershed Town Websites• DCR/DWSP <i>Downstream</i> Newsletter• Local media- Worcester Telegram & Gazette, Clinton Item, West Boylston Banner, Holden Landmark• DCR/DWSP Bulletin Board and Kiosk Notice• Ranger Hand Out	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All Watershed Town Halls• All Watershed Town Libraries• DCR Headquarters• Local Bait Shop• DCR Brochure Boxes• MassWildlife Central District Office

DCR: Division of Water Supply Protection

Mass.gov

Governor Deval L. Patrick

Lt. Governor Timothy P. Murray

EOEA Secretary Ian A. Bowles

dcr department of Conservation and Recreation

Division of Water Supply Protection

The Division of Water Supply Protection is comprised of two Offices.

The **Office of Watershed Management** section manages and protects the drinking water supply watersheds for approximately 2.2 million residents of Massachusetts, primarily in Greater Boston. The Quabbin Reservoir, Ware River, and Wachusett Reservoir watersheds are the sources of drinking water for distribution by the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA).

The **Office of Water Resources** promotes water quality and conservation through several functions.

- The Office of Water Resources provides technical staff support to the Water Resources Commission, developing water resources policy and watershed planning efforts, coordinating the review of proposed interbasin transfers, administering cooperative programs with the US Geological Survey, and managing the Rainfall Program (a network of approximately 150 precipitation observation stations, operated by volunteers throughout Massachusetts, and a precipitation database for research and analysis). In addition, staff is undertaking an eight year program developing Water Needs Forecasts in support of MassDEP's Water Management Act permit renewal effort.
- Staff operate the statewide Lakes & Ponds Program, offering technical assistance to communities and citizen groups, monitoring water quality at various public beaches to ensure public safety, and providing educational materials to the public about various lake issues.

[Watershed Management](#)

[Lakes & Ponds Program](#)

[Rainfall Program](#)

[Interbasin Transfer Act](#)

[Hazard Mitigation](#)

[Ipswich River Restoration](#)

[Water Needs Forecasting Methodology](#)

[River Basin Plans](#)

Information

Current Issues

[2011 Wachusett Public Access Plan Update and Survey](#)

[Quabbin Reservation 2010 Deer Hunt](#)

[Downstream Spring 2010: Unwanted Guests](#)

[Water Quality of Tributaries Wachusett Watershed 98-07](#)

[Zebra Mussel Information](#)

[Quabbin Green Certification](#)

[Water Supply Protection Gull Study](#)

[How to properly dispose of Unused and Expired Pharmaceuticals](#)


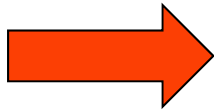
[Wachusett Fishing Guide](#)

[Quabbin Fishing Guide](#)

[Lakes and Ponds Program Hot Topic](#)

MWRA QUAB-CAM©

Current view of the Quabbin Reservoir

Information

- [The Watersheds](#)
- [Educational Programs](#)
- [Fact Sheets & Newsletters](#)
- [Payment in Lieu of Taxes](#)
- [Permits](#)
- [Plans](#)
- [Public Access](#)
- [Water Quality](#)
- [Water Supply Protection Trust](#)
- [Watershed Forestry](#)
- [Watershed Protection Act](#)
- [Contact Us](#)

[Office of Watershed Management](#)

[Division of Water Supply Protection](#)

WACHUSETT RESERVOIR WATERSHED PUBLIC ACCESS PLAN UPDATE

2011 Update Now in Process

- [Press Release](#)
- [October 28, 2010 Meeting Agenda](#)
- [Wachusett Reservoir Public Access Survey](#)

The Department of Conservation and Recreation Division of Water Supply Protection (formerly the Metropolitan District Commission Division of Watershed Management) owns 16,472 acres of land in the Wachusett Reservoir watershed. DCR manages these watersheds primarily for water quality protection, drinking water supply, and environmental resource protection purposes. The Metropolitan District Commission Division of Watershed Management Wachusett Reservoir Watershed Public Access Plan Update 2003 explains DCR policies and outlines control measures to be used to mitigate impacts from public access on those lands. This Plan includes policies for common recreational activities that occur on the land and water resources in the Wachusett Reservoir watershed. This update builds upon the information provided in the 1996 MDC Public Access Plan for the Wachusett Watershed and uses current regulations and legislation to outline policies for public access to MDC/DWM property in Boylston, Clinton, Holden, Hubbardston, Leominster, Princeton, Rutland, Sterling, and West Boylston. DCR will begin implementation of the MDC/DWM Wachusett Reservoir Watershed Public Access Plan Update 2003 in July, 2003.

[WACHUSETT RESEVOIR WATERSHED PUBLIC ACCESS SUMMARY](#)

- [Title Page/Table of Contents](#)
- [I. Introduction](#)
 - [II. Existing Conditions](#)
 - [III. Recreational Activities and Water Supply](#)
 - [IV. Public Access Policies](#)
 - [V. Plan Implementation](#)

[Bibliography](#)

[Appendix A: Hunter Survey](#)
[Appendix B: Watershed Regulations](#)

Public Access Rules

[Public Access Rules](#)

[Quabbin Reservoir](#)

[Wachusett Reservoir](#)

[Ware River](#)

[Sudbury Reservoir](#)

[General Rules](#)

The survey was designed to gain insight into the public's knowledge of DCR Rules and regulations and outreach efforts-

and for DCR to gain insight into visitor use patterns and activities

Also designed to determine the most effective way to distribute information such as land closures, educational information, notices, announcements, rules, etc. to the public

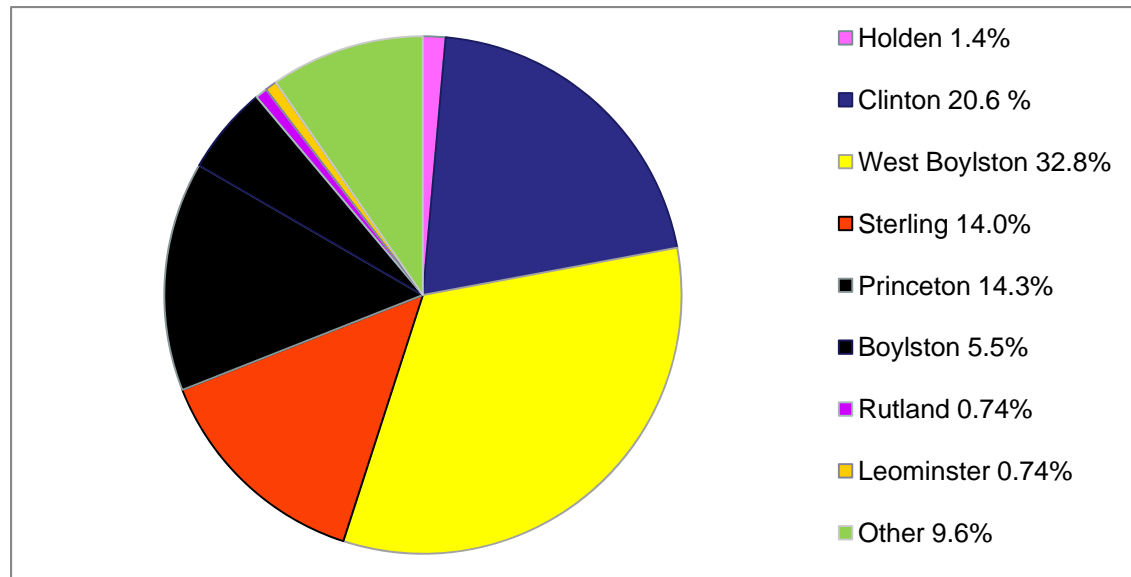
The Survey was open from October 28, 2010 until January 15, 2011

Public Participation:

320 Online surveys completed

7 Paper copies of survey returned

2 Comment letters received



What DCR learned from the survey:

- DCR lands are used most heavily during weekday and weekend days.
- DCR lands are utilized the least during the winter season.
- DCR lands are most used for hiking and walking. 93.3% of survey respondents engaged in this activity.
- A majority of respondents do not know who to contact in the case of an emergency or water/environmental issue.
- Dog walking was the most encountered rule violation by respondents.
- Most respondents (92%) are aware of the Watershed Rangers and about ½ have had an opportunity to talk with a Ranger.
- Respondents would like to see expanded bicycling, dog walking, and boating as allowed uses of DCR lands.

2011 Public Access
Encompasses Only
Minor Changes

2011 Public Access Plan Update Took Into Account:

- Identifying changes in existing conditions
- Identifying and evaluating the policies that have been implemented
- Assessing additional needs to meet the mandate of water quality and resource protection

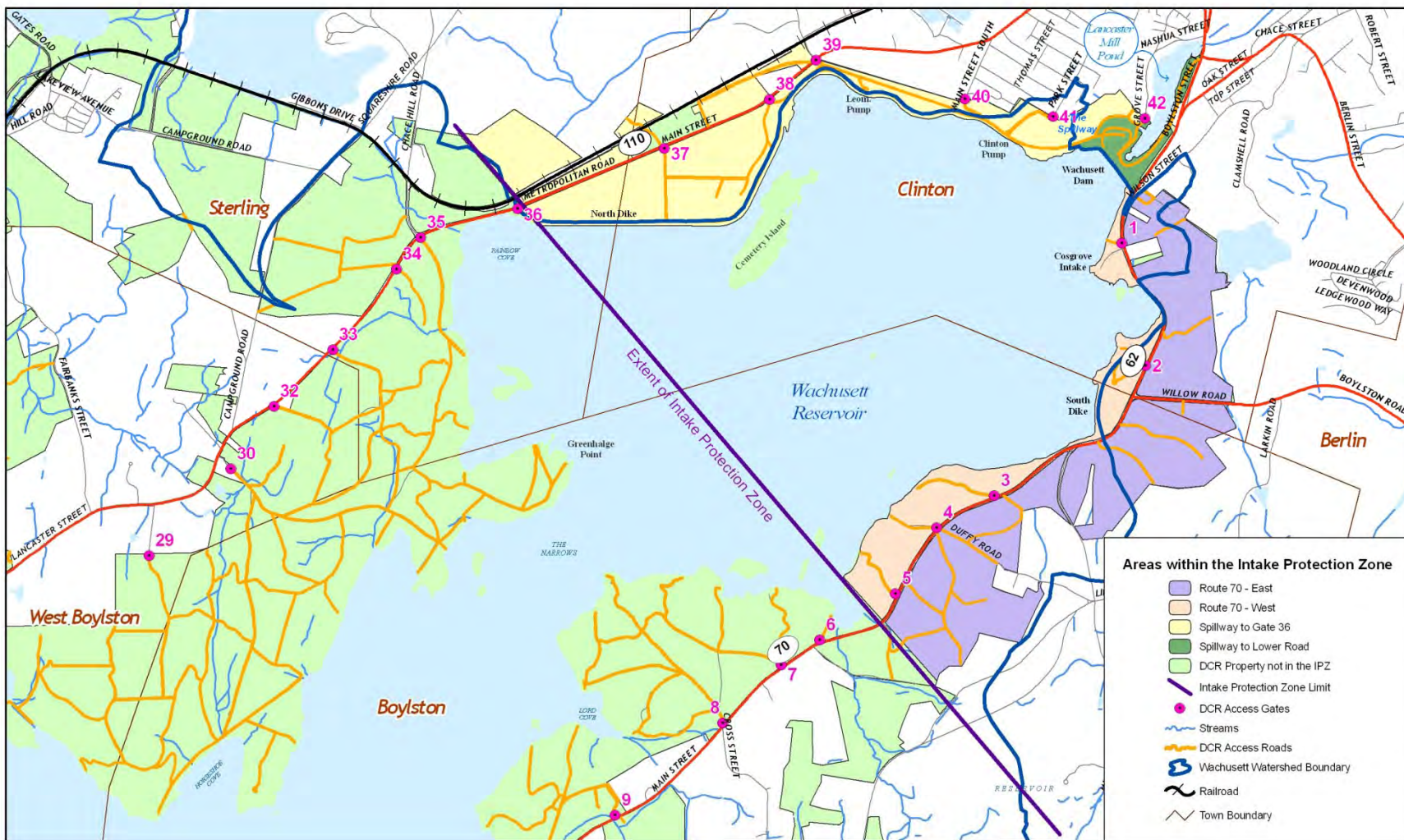
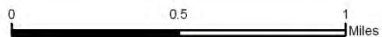
Activity	Current 2003 Policy	Proposed 2011 Policy
Shoreline Fishing	Integrate Off-Watershed Zone into Intake Protection Zone; no fishing allowed in Intake Protection Zone.	No Change
Hiking	Expand to allow access to lands east of Gates 1 and 2 Rte 70	No Change
Cross-Country Skiing	Expand to Allow access to lands east of Gates 1 and 2 Rte 70	No Change
Boating	Non-motorized boats allowed on Quinapoxet and Stillwater Rivers in the Tributary Headwaters Zone; non-motorized boats allowed on West Waushacum Pond.	No Change
Swimming	PROHIBITED	No Change
Bicycling	No permit requirement for off-road biking in designated area; clarify policy to allow biking from Gate 39 to 42 (formerly Off-Watershed Zone).	<u>Clarified:</u> Bicycling allowed in designated areas, rail trails, and from gate 39 to road below the dam on the old rail line bed only.
Horseback Riding	PROHIBITED	No Change
Camping	PROHIBITED	No Change
Motorized Vehicles (ATVs, ORVs, Snowmobiles)	PROHIBITED	No Change
Hunting	Hunting allowed with DCR permit. Hunting area is entire Tributary Headwaters Zone (locations must still meet DWFELE regulations).	No Change
Dog Walking	Allowed below Wachusett Dam with leash or while hunting in Tributary Headwaters Zone.	<u>Clarified:</u> Dogs (leashed) allowed from below the dam to posted signage at the top of the spillway or while actively hunting in Tributary Headwaters Zone.
Geocaching/ Letterboxing	None	<u>New:</u> Geocaching/letterboxing authorized in all areas where public is allowed. Guidelines must be followed.
Paintball	None	<u>New:</u> Paintball prohibited on all DCR/DWSP property.

2011 DRAFT PLAN includes the following minor changes and information:

- Reservoir and Tributary Shoreline Protection Zone → Reservoir Protection Zone
- Intake Protection Zone → Separated into 6 areas within plan for clarification of policies:
 - Spillway to Lower Road (including spillway, fountain area and river)
 - Promenade of the Dam Route 70
 - Spillway to Gate 36
 - Route 70 East (Non-reservoir side of Route 70)
 - Route 70 West (Reservoir side of Route 70)
 - Off watershed lands
- Lancaster Millpond (below Dam and Off watershed) ownership clarification and map
- Detailed information regarding recreational activity and water supply compatibility
- Water quality education and outreach efforts by DCR staff
- Geocaching and letterboxing guidelines

Intake Protection Zone

Wachusett Reservoir Watershed
Public Access Plan 2010



- Areas within the Intake Protection Zone**
- Route 70 - East
 - Route 70 - West
 - Spillway to Gate 36
 - Spillway to Lower Road
 - DCR Property not in the IPZ
 - Intake Protection Zone Limit
 - DCR Access Gates
 - Streams
 - DCR Access Roads
 - Wachusett Watershed Boundary
 - Railroad
 - Town Boundary

Activity	Intake Protection Zone				
	East Side (Non-reservoir) Route 70 from Gate 5 to Promenade	West Side (Reservoir) Route 70 from Gate 5 to Promenade	Promenade	Road Below Dam and Spillway to Top of Dam	North Dike from Spillway to Area just before Gate 36
Off Road Driving (ORVs, ATVs)	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Snowmobiling	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Bicycling	⊘	⊘	⊘	✓	✓1
Walking/Hiking	✓7	⊘	✓	✓	✓
Dog Walking	⊘	⊘	⊘	✓2	⊘
Cross-Country Skiing	✓7	⊘	⊘	✓	✓
Shoreline Fishing	⊘	⊘	⊘	✓3	⊘
Fishing with Waders	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Horseback Riding	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Hunting	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Boating – non-motorized	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Boating – motorized (including “jet skis”)	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Swimming	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Ice Skating/Ice Fishing	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Camping	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Picnicking	✓4,7	⊘	⊘	✓4	✓4
Fires & Cooking	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Programs/Assemblies	✓5,7	⊘	✓5	✓5	✓5
Trail Clearing/Trail Marking/Advertising	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Collecting/Metal Detecting	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Geocaching/Letterboxing	✓6,7	⊘	⊘	✓6	✓6

1. Allowed on rail bed from gate 39 to spillway only. 2. Dogs only allowed to top of spillway and must stop at sign. Dog waste must be picked up and disposed of properly.
3. Fishing allowed from fountain impoundment to approximately 275 feet after concrete abutments of old railroad bridge. 4. Trash must be carried off of DCR property.
5. DCR Special permit required. 6. Geocaching Guidelines must be adhered to and all DCR rules apply. 7. Except for property between Rte 62(Willow Rd) and Mile Hill Roads.

Activity	Reservoir Protection Zone	Tributary Headwaters Zone
Off Road Driving (ORVs, ATVs)	⊘	⊘
Snowmobiling	⊘	⊘
Bicycling	⊘	✓
Walking/Hiking	✓	✓
Dog Walking	⊘	⊘ ¹
Cross-Country Skiing	✓	✓
Shoreline Fishing	✓	✓
Fishing with Waders	✓ ²	✓
Horseback Riding	⊘	⊘
Hunting	⊘	✓ ³
Boating – non-motorized	✓ ⁴	✓
Boating – motorized (including “jet skis”)	⊘	⊘
Swimming	⊘	⊘
Ice Skating/Ice Fishing	⊘	⊘
Camping	⊘	⊘
Picnicking	✓	✓
Fires & Cooking	⊘	⊘
Programs/Assemblies	✓ ³	✓ ³
Trail Clearing/Trail Marking/Advertising	⊘	⊘
Collecting/Metal Detecting	⊘	⊘
Geocaching/Letterboxing	✓ ⁵	✓ ⁵

1. Dogs allowed with hunting permit only. 2. Upstream of DCR dam at Oakdale Power Station on Quinapoxet River and upstream of the Stillwater River confluence with Waushacum Brook.
3. DCR Special permit required. 4. Canoes/kayaks allowed at :West Waushacum Pond; on the Stillwater River upstream of Muddy Pond Road bridge; on the Quinapoxet River upstream of dam at Oakdale Power Station. 5. Geocaching Guidelines must be adhered to and all DCR rules apply.

Next Steps

- May 20, 2011: Comments on DRAFT Plan due.
- **July 2011: 2011 Public Access Plan Implementation.**

Additional Information

Website: www.mass.gov/dcr/watersupply/watershed/wachaccess.htm

If you have comments or suggestions

Email: dcr.updates@state.ma.us

*Note **Wachusett Reservoir Access Plan** in subject line.*

Write: Department of Conservation and Recreation,
251 Causeway Street, Suite 600
Boston, MA 02114

Note: Public comments submitted to DCR by email or letter will be posted on the DCR website in their entirety.