

Public Comments Invited for State Forest and State Wildlife Lands Re-Certification Effort

In April 2009, Scientific Certification Systems (SCS), a certification body accredited by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), was retained by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs to conduct a re-certification evaluation of the 550,000 acres of forest lands managed by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (DFW). Certification by the FSC is professional acknowledgement that the landowner is practicing responsible forest management that is environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable.

As part of the public participation process involved in recertification, SCS requires public comment on a complete listing of DCR and DFW lands to be included in, and excluded from, the scope of the certification and an explanation of reasons for excluding certain properties. The public comment period on the lists of lands will be from November 20, 2009 through December 20, 2009. DFW posted information about this process on October 30, 2009, with an original comment deadline of November 30, 2009, but DFW is extending its comment period through December 20, 2009 for the convenience of people who may want to comment on both DFW and DCR lands. Both agencies are specifically seeking public comments relative to the properties that will be included vs. excluded from the FSC re-certification process. The 2009 re-certification evaluation audit report, which was drafted in March 2009 and was completed in August 2009, can be found at http://www.mass.gov/Eoeea/docs/eea/lf/green_certification_report_2009.pdf. The evaluation report established major conditions that DCR and DFW must comply with before any state forest lands or state wildlife lands can be re-certified. The audit report fully explained the reasons and rationale for excluding certain properties from the current certificate, whether it is because traditional forestry is not compatible with a particular facility or because District Forest Plans are not completed.

From Section A 1.3.1 of the re-certification evaluation report:

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) - Bureau of Forestry (BOF) has responsibility for more than 290,000 acres of state forests, parks and other properties. A total of 7,903 acres managed by the BOF are excluded from the scope of this certificate. The excluded BOF sites that are outside of the scope of this certification assessment include a variety of land types deemed to be incompatible with certification and active forest management, including small, non-forested sites (e.g., dams, beaches, pools, fire towers, churches, boat ramps, etc) as well as lands that were removed in part due to public concern, including Robinson State Park, Connecticut River Greenway State Park and the Walden Pond State Reservation.

From Section A 1.3.2 of the re-certification Evaluation report:

The Bureau of Forestry (BOF) has responsibility for more than 290,476 acres of state forests, parks and other properties. A total of 154,028 have been excluded from the scope of the certificate. The excluded BOF lands are forests without approved management plans and a variety of land types deemed to be incompatible with certification and active forest management, including small, non-forested sites (e.g., dams, beaches, pools, fire towers, churches, boat ramps, etc) as well as lands that were removed in part due to public concern, including Robinson State Park, Connecticut River Greenway State Park and the Walden Pond State Reservation. The DCR Urban Properties (properties within the metropolitan Boston area) are also outside the scope of certification.

To comply with the SCS requirements, both agencies identified a subset of lands presently eligible for recertification, a subset of lands that can become eligible for certification in the

future, and a subset of lands that will not be submitted for certification for the reasons laid out by SCS. To view the state forest lands lists with reviewed management plans go to <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/forestry/pdf/recertification-west.pdf>. To view state forest lands without reviewed management plans, go to <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/forestry/pdf/recertification-east.pdf>. Each list of state lands indicates which properties are eligible/appropriate for re-certification and those that are not. Comments on the state forest lands lists may be emailed to: fsc.comments@state.ma.us or sent by postal mail to: Bureau of Forestry, Mass. Department of Conservation and Recreation, Box 484, 40 Cold Storage Drive, Amherst, MA 01004. To view the state wildlife lands lists, go to: http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/habitat/management/bdi/forest_mgt/green_recert_efforts.htm Comments regarding the state wildlife lands lists may be emailed to Mass.Wildlife@state.ma.us, or sent via postal service mail to: "Forest Certification Comment", MassWildlife, 1 Rabbit Hill Road, Westborough, MA 01581.