

The Department of Conservation and Recreation's Division of Water Supply Protection, Office of Watershed Management (OWM) is responsible for providing high quality source drinking water to the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) for distribution to 2.2 million people in 51 Commonwealth communities. The 412 billion gallon/39.4 mi² Quabbin Reservoir and the 65 billion gallon/6.5 mi² Wachusett Reservoir are the heart of this watershed system, along with water seasonally diverted from the Ware River. The Sudbury Reservoir system serves as an emergency reserve. OWM owns over 100,000 acres of land within the 466 mi² total watershed area. OWM is continually planning to maintain the superior water quality in its reservoirs.

There are three critical components to the OWM planning process for each watershed. **The Public Access Plan** describes the management policies that allow people to recreate on OWM lands while still protecting water quality. **The Land Management Plan** is a thorough description of the watershed's physical features, the natural resources on OWM property, and the variety of techniques used by the agency to enhance water quality, including land protection and forest and wildlife management. **The Watershed Protection Plan** takes information from the Public Access Plan and Land Management Plan and integrates water monitoring findings and other studies to create an action plan that is the basis for OWM's annual work plan and budget. The Watershed Protection Plan acts as an "umbrella," encompassing all efforts by OWM that affect both public and private watershed lands in the quest to provide high quality drinking water that requires minimal treatment.

Additional studies and reports utilized in the Watershed Protection Plan include: annual **Water Quality Reports** and basin specific **Environmental Quality Assessments** identify water quality trends, link problems to sources of contamination, and develop prioritized goals for corrective actions; **Emergency Action Plans** detail the necessary steps and chain of command required in case of a catastrophe associated with the reservoirs. **The Land Acquisition Panel** analyzes and guides OWM's purchase of properties that are critical to long-term water quality protection. **Aquatic Invasive Species, Gull Habitat, Stormwater Management, Agriculture, and Hazardous Materials Emergency Response** are some of the topics that have come under special study.

Information from all of these plans and reports is integrated into the **Annual Work Plan**, which is submitted for approval by the five person board of trustees of the Water Supply Protection Trust. The Trust was established by the legislature in 2004 as a mechanism for MWRA to fund OWM.

Public outreach is an important element of OWM's watershed protection efforts. Each plan seeks input from a variety of perspectives—such as legislatively mandated watershed advisory groups, visitors, abutters, and user interest groups—through public meetings, the press, and the DCR website. OWM supports an ongoing discourse with the public on water supply protection strategies through individual contact by OWM Watershed Rangers and interpretive staff, implementation of the Watershed Protection Act, municipal technical assistance, fact sheets, and the bi-annual newsletter *Downstream*.

This comprehensive approach to watershed planning has made it possible for MWRA to maintain a waiver from federal filtration requirements and make the Office of Watershed Management a national model. While consultants are utilized when necessary for specific expertise, the vast majority of these plans and outreach material are developed by OWM staff. The table on the reverse side provides a summary of the status of OWM's plans, including the current version, term, and history. Recent plans, fact sheets, newsletters, and other information about the Office of Watershed Management are available on-line at www.mass.gov/dcr/watersupply/watershed/water.htm.

Planning for the Protection of the DCR/MWRA Water Supply System

Division of Water Supply Protection

Office of Watershed Management

September 2010

dcr
Massachusetts



**DCR Division of Water Supply Protection
Office of Watershed Management Planning Summary**

All plans produced by OWM staff unless noted otherwise

Type of Plan	Latest Publication	Term	Next Planned Revision	Previous Versions (Consultant)
Watershed Protection Plans				
Quabbin Reservoir/Ware River	2008	5 years	2013	1991 (Rizzo); 2000
Wachusett Reservoir	2008	5 years	2013	1991 (Rizzo);1998 (CDM); 2003
Sudbury Reservoir System	2008	As Needed	2013	1997 (CEI)
Land Management Plans				
Quabbin Reservoir	2007	10 years	2017	1961, 1972, 1986, 1995
Ware River	2003	10 years	2013	1986
Wachusett Reservoir	2001	10 years	2011	
Sudbury Reservoir System	2005	10 years	2015	
Public Access Plans				
Quabbin Reservoir	2006	5-10 years	2016	1988, 1998
Ware River	2010	5-10 years	2019	1988, 2000
Wachusett Reservoir	2003	5-10 years	2011	1996
Sudbury Reservoir System	2010	5-10 years	2020	1994, 2002
Annual Plans and Reports				
OWM Fiscal Year Work Plan				Annually since 2005
Quabbin and Wachusett Water Quality Reports				Annually since 1987
Land Acquisition				A list of properties is periodically developed for approval by the MWRA.
Emergency Action Plans				1993–1995 (GZA and GEI); 2006–Present by MWRA
Environmental Quality Assessments (Replaced Sanitary Surveys in 2000)		5 years	1 sub-basin/year	Sanitary Surveys: 1988–2000. EQAs: 2000-present
Special Studies				
Aquatic Invasive Species	2010			
Gull Habitat	2007-2010			
Stormwater Management	1999			(CDM)
Agriculture	1998			(CEI)
Highways/Railways Hazardous Material Release Control	1998			(Rizzo)
Hazardous Materials Emergency Response	1997			(CEI)

* Cutting plans are developed annually to guide specific forestry activities.

OFFICE OF WATERSHED MANAGEMENT

Department of Conservation and Recreation
Division of Water Supply Protection
251 Causeway St., Boston, MA 02114
617-626-1250
www.mass.gov/dcr/watersupply/watershed/water.htm

