



**For immediate release
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DCR HOLDING PUBLIC MEETING TO DISCUSS PLANS FOR CANTON AIRPORT SITE

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), in partnership with State Senator Brian Joyce and State Representative William Galvin, has scheduled a public meeting on Thursday, March 26, to discuss a project to clean up contamination at the former Canton Airport and convert the former hanger area into public parkland.

In 1996, DCR acquired 328 acres at the former airport site. Five years later, a report commissioned by DCR identified significant PCB contamination in the 5.7-acre former hanger area. In 2006, the hangers were demolished, but PCBs and metals remain in the soil.

In order to create the parkland, DCR must first remove the PCBs and heavy metals or cap the areas containing them. The PCBs were released by former industrial users of the property. The heavy metals are chiefly lead from lead shot released during hunting activities.

In addition to developing the site for parkland, DCR plans to protect and enhance wildlife habitat, and protect public drinking water resources in the area.

“We are committed to turning this parcel into public parkland, both active and passive,” said DCR Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr. “It’s important that we hear from the community on the activities they would like to see there as we move forward with the plans.”

The March 26 public meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. in the Ponkapoag Golf Course function room at 2167 Washington St. in Canton.

“I am pleased to work with Rep. Bill Galvin and the Patrick Administration to get this contaminated site cleaned,” said Senator Joyce, “and I look forward to hearing what area residents want to do with the land going forward.”

“Securing funding for this decontamination project in the 2002 Environmental Bond Bill was an extremely high priority for me and the Town of Canton,” said Representative Galvin. “I am so pleased that this project is now in its third stage and plans for redevelopment are being seriously discussed.”

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The entire former airport site sits within the Fowl Meadow Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). ACECs are places in Massachusetts that receive special recognition because of the quality, uniqueness, and significance of their natural and cultural resources. ACEC designation creates a framework for local and regional management of those resources.

A second public meeting will be scheduled later this spring to continue hearing public comments on the reuse of the property. A Master Plan will then be developed for the site and a third public meeting will be held this summer to present the proposed Master Plan. DCR officials expect the final construction design and permit approvals for the site remediation and parkland construction by early 2010 and construction to begin in summer 2010.

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The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), an agency of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, oversees 450,000 acres of parks and forests, beaches, bike trails, watersheds, and dams, in addition to 278 bridges and miles of roadways. Led by Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr., the agency's mission is to protect, promote, and enhance our common wealth of natural, cultural, and recreational resources. To learn more about DCR, our facilities, and our programs, please visit www.mass.gov/dcr. Contact us at mass.parks@state.ma.us.