



For immediate release
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**PATRICK-MURRAY ADMINISTRATION LAUNCHES
PUBLIC WORKSHOP SERIES
FOR STATE FOREST AND PARKS LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS**

BOSTON - The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) will hold six public workshops in November and December at various locations across the Commonwealth to seek public input on landscape designations for all DCR lands within the state park system.

The landscape designation process involves categorizing 308,000 acres of DCR lands as either “parklands,” “reserves,” or “woodlands” to prioritize the services and values these lands provide to the public and the environment. The designations are a top recommendation of the Forest Futures Visioning process that the agency undertook in 2009-2010 to develop a renewed vision and long-term strategy for managing forest lands in the state park system. The designations will ensure long-term protection of the lands and guide their management.

Of the three new categories, “parklands” would be managed primarily for recreation, human experiences, and the protection of cultural and natural features. “Reserves” would be managed primarily for biological diversity based on natural processes and the protection of large, contiguous blocks of high-value ecosystems. “Woodlands” would be managed primarily for state-of-the-art sustainable forestry, forest products, and active carbon management.

“Governor Patrick sees our state parks and forests as precious natural resources, and we intend to preserve them,” said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Ian Bowles. “By designating parklands, reserves, and woodlands, we will be clear about how we manage the various kinds of lands under our stewardship, and extend the utmost protection to those resources with the greatest ecological value.”

The Forest Futures Visioning process, which brought together forest resource experts, stakeholders, and the general public, considered the public benefits and values of forest lands and resulted in recommendations on forest stewardship practices. The Forest Futures Technical Steering Committee issued recommendations to DCR, and in April, the Patrick-Murray Administration announced a Commonwealth Forest Heritage Plan for managing state forests. The Plan sets out a new paradigm for stewardship of state forests and the parks system as a whole, focusing on conservation biology and public engagement while clarifying the benefits and values of the lands through landscape designations.

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The Plan quadruples the amount of forest land set aside from commercial logging. Under the Plan, at least 60 percent of forest land, or 185,000 acres, will be designated as parklands and reserves.

“Governor Patrick and DCR have made a commitment to implement the landscape designation model that will guide the management of our lands,” said DCR Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr. “This effort to categorize DCR lands represents a new approach to stewardship of the park system.”

DCR will hold the public workshops in Worcester, Westfield, Pittsfield, Boston, Dighton, and Danvers to obtain input on the development of criteria to define and select each category and management guidelines that will be applied to each.

The scheduled workshops are:

Monday

November 15, 2010

6:30-8:30 p.m.

Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission

Union Hall in Union Station

Worcester

Tuesday

November 16, 2010

6:30-8:30 p.m.

North Middle School

350 Southampton Rd.

Westfield

Thursday

November 18, 2010

6:30-8:30 p.m.

Berkshire Athenaeum

1 Wendell Ave.

Pittsfield

Monday

November 22, 2010

3 p.m.-5 p.m.
100 Cambridge St.
Boston

Tuesday
November 30, 2010
6:30-8:30 p.m.
Bristol County Agricultural High School
135 Center St.
Dighton

Thursday
December 2, 2010
6:30-8:30 p.m.
Essex Agricultural & Technical High School
562 Maple St.
Danvers

With input from the workshop series, DCR will finalize the selection criteria. A second round of public workshops will be held in spring 2011 to introduce the draft application of the categories and obtain input on the draft before it is finalized.

The workshops are open to anyone interested in the future management of the DCR parks system. To receive information on the process as DCR moves forward, send an email to Jessica.Rowcroft@state.ma.us and request to be added to the forestry email list.

Further information about the Forest Futures Visioning Process is available on the DCR website at www.mass.gov/dcr.

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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, dams, and parkways. 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.