



**For immediate release
February 1, 2010**

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DCR SEEKS PUBLIC COMMENT ON DRAFT FOREST STEWARDSHIP RECOMMENDATIONS

BOSTON – The Technical Steering Committee of the Department of Conservation and Recreation’s (DCR) Forest Futures Visioning Process is seeking public comment on its recommendations for forest stewardship. DCR will host five public forums across the Commonwealth in February to discuss these recommendations.

The forums are scheduled in Amherst, North Adams, Pittsfield, Taunton, and Westborough. Each forum will include a brief overview of the recommendations, a short time for clarification questions followed by facilitated table discussion. All feedback received at the public forums will be provided to the TSC and made available for viewing on the DCR website.

“These recommendations are the result of the Technical Steering Committee’s hard work over many months,” said DCR Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr. “It is important that the public provide us with their input. I hope everyone takes the time to review them and attend the forums to share their opinions.”

DCR convened the Forest Futures Visioning Process last spring to determine how best to manage the myriad public benefits and values of forest land within the agency’s parks system. Among these are recreation, tourism, aesthetics, renewable forest products, habitat diversity, and landscape ecology, and how to strike the appropriate balance among them.

The process has several components, including the formation of an Advisory Group of Stakeholders and the Technical Steering Committee. The Technical Steering Committee is composed of 11 individuals who have a high level of expertise in the issues, trends, and best practices of forest conservation and ecology, landscape ecology, natural resource economics and law, recreation, silviculture, aesthetics, watersheds, and wildlife habitat. The committee developed the draft recommendations with input from the public and the stakeholders through a number of public forums over the past 10 months.

The TSC’s draft recommendations are posted on the DCR website: www.mass.gov/dcr. The public is encouraged to review the recommendations and comment on them by email to

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MODRDCRFFVP@umb.edu and through an online survey available on DCR's website. The Technical Steering Committee is expected to make its final recommendations to DCR in late winter 2010.

DCR contracted with the Massachusetts Office of Dispute Resolution & Public Collaboration (MODR) at the University of Massachusetts in Boston to develop a process, act as facilitators throughout its implementation, and ensure that the discussion and processes are unbiased.

MODR is adding an additional public forum immediately following the Amherst forum on Thursday, February 9, 2010 at 7p.m. where citizens will be invited to present their feedback on the draft recommendations directly to the TSC.

The public is welcome to attend and share any concerns or suggestions regarding these recommendations. This feedback will be incorporated into the Technical Steering Committee's final recommendations.

The public forums will be at the following dates, times, and locations:

Thursday, February 4, 2010
6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Westborough Public Library
55 West Main Street, Westborough
(Snow date: Tuesday, February 16)

Saturday, February 6, 2010
10 a.m.– Noon
North Adams Public Library
74 Church Street, North Adams
(Snow date: Saturday, February 13)

Saturday, February 6, 2010
2 p.m. – 4 p.m.
Berkshire Community College – Melville Hall Room 201
1350 West Street, Pittsfield
(Snow date: Saturday, February 13)

Tuesday, February 9, 2010
5 p.m. – 7 p.m. and 7 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
Jones Library

43 Amity Street, Amherst

Thursday, February 11, 2010

5 p.m. – 7 p.m.

Taunton Public Library

12 Pleasant Street, Taunton

(Snow date: Thursday, February 18)

For more information on this public process, visit 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.