



For immediate release
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Contact: Wendy Fox
617-626-1453

DCR OFFERS ACTIVITIES FOR FEBRUARY SCHOOL VACATION WEEK

BOSTON – The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) has scheduled many special activities for all ages during February school vacation week, February 13 – 21.

Outdoor explorations at Mt. Tom State Reservation in Turners Falls, birding at South Cape Beach in Mashpee, and snowshoeing at Harold Parker State Forest in North Andover are just a few. Also, this year, for the first time, DCR will sponsor winter activities on Spectacle Island in Boston Harbor.

“Even in February, the parks and woods are welcoming with nature adventures of all sorts,” said DCR Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr. “I hope students of all ages, and their friends and families, will come out to learn about the great outdoors and enjoy the programs DCR has planned.”

On Saturday, February 20, Boston’s Best Cruises will take passengers to Spectacle Island for “Snow Day on Spectacle,” from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Participants should bring their own snow shoes, cross-country skis, or hiking boots. Tickets for the boat are \$14 round trip and must be purchased in advance. Call 617-770-0040, ext. 1 for tickets or visit www.harborexpress.com. For more information on the events on Spectacle Island, and to register for the events, call 781-740-1605, ext. 202.

Below is a sampling of other February vacation week activities on DCR properties, listed by region. All events are free unless otherwise noted. DCR is also extending public skating hours at many rinks. Call 617-626-1450 or visit www.mass.gov/dcr/events.htm .

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COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS · EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

Department of Conservation and Recreation

251 Causeway Street, Suite 600

Boston MA 02114-2119

617-626-1250 617-626-1351 Fax

www.mass.gov/dcr



Deval L. Patrick

Governor

Timothy P. Murray

Ian A. Bowles, Secretary, Executive
Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs

Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., Commissioner
Department of Conservation & Recreation

Central

Ice skating

Wendell State Forest

Turners Falls

Sunday, February 14

10 a.m.-3 p.m.

DCR staff hosts a day of free ice skating for families and individuals of all ages. A rink-side warming fire and complimentary hot chocolate will help keep everyone warm and comfortable.

Winter Wonderland Family Fun

Great Falls Discovery Center

Mt. Tom State Reservation

Turners Falls

Monday, February 15

2-3 p.m.

What makes winter so special? To find out, join DCR's regional educator for outdoor explorations and indoor activities that are fun for all.

Southeast/Cape Cod

Valentine Hike

Wrentham State Forest, Wrentham

Sunday, February 14

1-3 p.m.

Valentine's Day is a day to celebrate love of family, friends, animals and nature. This Valentine's Day, take a hike and enjoy the outdoors with others. Meet at the gravel parking lot off Taunton Street in Wrentham at 1 p.m. This hike is appropriate for adults and older children. Please dress for the weather.

Winter Birding

South Cape Beach, Mashpee

Sunday, February 14

9-11 a.m.

The cold weather brings a new set of avian visitors to our coasts. Hike along Vineyard Sound and the edge of Sage Lot Pond in search of loons, eiders, Brant geese, and perhaps a surprise or two. (Last winter's migrants included snowy owl and harlequin ducks.) Prepare to walk up to 2 miles in soft sand. Dress warmly, bring binoculars and water. Meet at the Bayberry Parking Lot off Great Oak Road

Feathers, Fluff, and Fur

Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Reserve, Falmouth

Tuesday, February 16

10 a.m. -1:30 p.m.

Discover unique characteristics and behaviors that help wildlife survive extreme weather conditions. Look for signs of which animals are active in winter and learn how snow can keep them warm. Explore the outdoors and make an indoor snow craft to take home. Meet at the Visitor Center, 149 Waquoit Highway.

Geology Rocks

Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Reserve, Falmouth

Wednesday, February 17

10-11:30 a.m.

Experiment with sand, rocks, water and ice. Discover how Cape Cod was formed thousands of years ago. Collect samples to observe under the microscope and get creative with a sand art project. Meet at the Visitor Center, 149 Waquoit Highway.

North Shore

Beach Discovery

Revere Beach, Revere

Wednesday, February 17

11 a.m.-noon

Suitable for children ages 5 through 11 with adult chaperones. Explore signs of life along the beach and learn ways to help keep the area beautiful and safe for wildlife and people. Meet at the William G. Reinstein Bandstand on Revere Beach Boulevard.

Winter Campfire Fun

Revere Beach, Revere

Friday, February 19

6-8 p.m.

Join DCR Rangers and staff for an ocean-side campfire. Toast marshmallows and warm up with hot chocolate. This event is suitable for children and adults, and will be cancelled in the event of extreme weather. Meet at 410 Revere Beach Blvd., across from Kelly's Roast Beef.

Winter Fun Day

Harold Parker State Forest, North Andover

Wednesday, February 17

11 a.m.-2 p.m.

Put on skis or snowshoes and enjoy a family day of cross-country skiing, snow shoeing, or walking in the snow. Hike with a ranger at noon and enjoy hot chocolate and marshmallows. Meet at the pavilion on Middleton Road, North Andover. Wear hiking footwear and bring your skis or snowshoes. Also, bring water and sunscreen as appropriate.

Track It!

Maudslay State Park, Newburyport

Monday, February 15

1-3 p.m.

Learn how to track wild animals. Being able to identify the tracks and signs of wildlife along the trail will add to your enjoyment of nature in winter. Join us for an indoor lesson in track identification, followed by a one-hour walk to search for tracks and signs. Wear warm clothes and boots. Hot chocolate will be served. Meet at the park headquarters on Curzon Mill Road.

Seeking Snowy Owl

Parker River National Wildlife Refuge, Newburyport

Tuesday, February 16

Noon - 3 p.m.

Join us at the Visitor Center for a free program on the extraordinary life of owls, and meet several live owls from the York Center for Wildlife in York, Maine. Then proceed to the refuge to look for the beautiful snowy owl, a winter visitor from the north. Dress warmly and bring binoculars and a spotting scope if you have them. Due to the popularity of this program in 2009, two programs will be presented, at noon and again at 1 p.m. To assure a seat, arrive at noon and enjoy our exhibits.

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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.