



For immediate release
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**TO PROTECT PUBLIC SAFETY, HISTORIC LANDMARK, DCR WILL
RESTRICT ACCESS TO WALDEN POND THIS SEASON**

Beaches and trails are flooded due to heavy spring rains

To protect public safety and a historic landmark, the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) will reduce visitor capacity to Walden Pond State Reservation this season as heavy spring rains have caused water levels in the pond to rise several feet above normal, covering beach areas and trails.

DCR had divers remove hazardous materials and structures such as benches, fences and wooden platforms that as a result of the high water level were submerged in the beach areas. Flooded trails, including sections of the popular Pond Path that circles the pond, will be closed to protect natural resources and public safety, and signage will alert park visitors to the restrictions and alternative paths. To control the number of people visiting the Reservation, parking will be limited to 169 spaces, about half the usual number, and, to protect public safety, swimming will be prohibited outside lifeguarded areas.

"In the interest of protecting public safety and safeguarding the historic and natural features of the Reservation, DCR believes restricting public access is the best approach," said DCR Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr. "Walden Pond is an extremely popular destination, both for local residents and indeed for visitors from around the world, and DCR is committed to keeping it open as much as possible."

Park staff members will direct walkers and hikers to marked trails in the Reservation other than the Pond Path, and will suggest other nearby outdoor recreation areas, including Cochituate State Park in Wayland, Great Brook Farm State Park in Carlisle, Hopkinton State Park in Hopkinton, and Lowell Heritage State Park in Lowell. To enforce the restrictions on access and swimming, DCR plans to provide additional support from Rangers and Environmental Police Officers to the Reservation.

Walden Pond is a glacial, kettle-hole pond, with no surface water flowing in or out. Water levels in the pond are determined by precipitation and surrounding groundwater levels. The pond is the deepest lake in the Commonwealth, measuring nearly 90 feet at its deepest

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spot. Walden Pond has been designated a National Historic Landmark, and is considered the birthplace of the conservation movement.

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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