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DCR ANNOUNCES APPROVAL OF BARRIER BEACH MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR SALISBURY BEACH STATE RESERVATION

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) today announced that the Town of Salisbury's Conservation Commission has approved a comprehensive Barrier Beach Management Plan for Salisbury Beach State Reservation.

The plan is meant to guide the preservation and enhancement of recreational opportunities for the public while, at the same time, protecting the fragile dunes, rare species, and wildlife habitats of the barrier beach system. It is the result of a year-long collaboration among DCR, Salisbury town officials and the Salisbury Conservation Commission, the Salisbury Beach Betterment Association, and the waterfront projects consulting firm of Vine Associates Inc.

The plan gives DCR a framework for planning sustainable recreation, facility improvements, and maintenance activities.

"This is the most detailed and developed plan of any of DCR's coastal properties," said DCR Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr. "We have had a management plan for the Salisbury Beach State Reservation for some time, but last year's devastating spring storm provided the impetus to take that plan even further."

To help fund the efforts outlined in the plan, State Senator Steven Baddour and State Representative Michael Costello were instrumental in the Legislature's recent establishment of a Salisbury Beach Preservation Trust, which will help finance the long-term preservation and maintenance of the Reservation. Effective at the start of the 2009 season, the Trust will be funded by a \$2 surcharge on parking and camping fees at the Reservation. The Trust will also support operations at the beach, such as dune plantings, public access improvements, signage updates, wildlife management, and protection of rare species.

"This is a major step toward finding real long-term solutions to the fragile state of Salisbury Beach, not just a temporary quick-fix," said Senator Baddour. "I am pleased that DCR has collaborated with the Town of Salisbury on the plan, and I look forward to working with everyone involved to help save what is not only a popular beach, but a regional treasure."

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Representative Costello said, “Salisbury Beach is a wonderful destination for family fun and an important source of tourism revenue. The Management Plan contains detailed initiatives intended to protect and preserve this natural resource. I am appreciative of the efforts made by so many in crafting this plan, and would especially like to thank Commissioner Rick Sullivan for his leadership.”

Salisbury Beach State Reservation is unique among DCR coastal properties in being the only area where the state-owned barrier dune also protects more than 200 privately owned parcels. In 2007, a severe April storm brought high winds and fierce tides that swallowed many dunes along the beach, threatening a number of private homes. The new management plan addresses concerns raised in the wake of that storm by developing strategies to strengthen and renourish the dunes to prevent similar damage in the future.

The plan lays out regular maintenance activities to be performed by DCR, provides guidance on monitoring the reservation for rare shorebird nesting sites and implementing appropriate protective measures, identifies storm-related management issues such as removing debris after a storm and reestablishing safe public access, encourages private homeowners along the beach to install snow fence and dune plantings to help rebuild and stabilize their dunes, and provides recommendations for educating homeowners and visitors of the risks associated with coastal storms.

“The Town of Salisbury is truly fortunate to have the Department of Conservation and Recreation as a strong and willing partner in protecting and enhancing Salisbury Beach,” said Jerry Klima, chairman of the Salisbury Board of Selectmen. “The new Salisbury Beach Management Plan will be a major help in protecting our coastal property over the long term.”

Public copies of the Salisbury Beach State Reservation Barrier Beach Management Plan are available at the Salisbury Conservation Commission office in Town Hall and at the Salisbury Public Library. The Plan also will be posted soon on DCR’s website: 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, 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.

