



For immediate release
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DCR SCHEDULES PUBLIC MEETING TO DISCUSS MT. GREYLOCK CAMPGROUND

Agency plans to convert campground to hike-in facility only

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) has scheduled a public meeting for Tuesday, December 9, 2008, to discuss the agency's plans to convert the campground at Mt. Greylock to a hike-in facility beginning with the 2009 camping season.

The meeting, at 7 p.m. in the Mt. Greylock Visitors Center, will focus on the agency's plan to offer a largely car-free camping experience at the 22 campsites on the shoulder of the state's highest peak. Until 2007, when road construction forced the closing of the access roads, campers could drive to the campground.

"Throughout DCR's system of 29 campgrounds, there are only two – one on the Boston Harbor Islands and one on Washburn Island in the Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve on Cape Cod – where a family can camp in a car-free environment," said DCR Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr. "We frequently hear from campers that they would like a camping experience that is not as challenging as backpacking on the Appalachian Trail but is more challenging than walking from their car to the picnic table. We believe the Mt. Greylock Campground is the perfect opportunity to offer that experience."

Under the plan, campers staying at the 15 tent sites and 7 group sites at Mt. Greylock would park off the historic Greylock Parkway and hike approximately 1.5 miles to the campground. The limited, car-free access would help showcase the campground's setting and offer campers an enhanced connection to the outdoors. The lack of daily traffic on Sperry Road also would help protect the early hairstreak butterfly, a protected species under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act, which frequents the puddles along Sperry Road.

For the last two seasons, the campground has been a de facto car-free area because the roads to the top of Mt. Greylock were closed for construction. To access the campground, campers had to hike 2.5 miles up the mountain.

"For the past two years, it has been entirely hike-in," said Gary Briere, head of DCR's Recreation Bureau. "Nonetheless, we have seen a steady flow of weekend campers. The campground will be more accessible than it has been during the last two seasons, but

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maintaining it as a hike-in area will preserve what people have come to enjoy about that camping experience.”

At the public meeting, DCR will solicit public input on the plan and will share details for accommodating campers with disabilities and for offering limited vehicular access to Stony Ledge during late summer and fall, after the flight season of the early hairstreak butterfly.

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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.