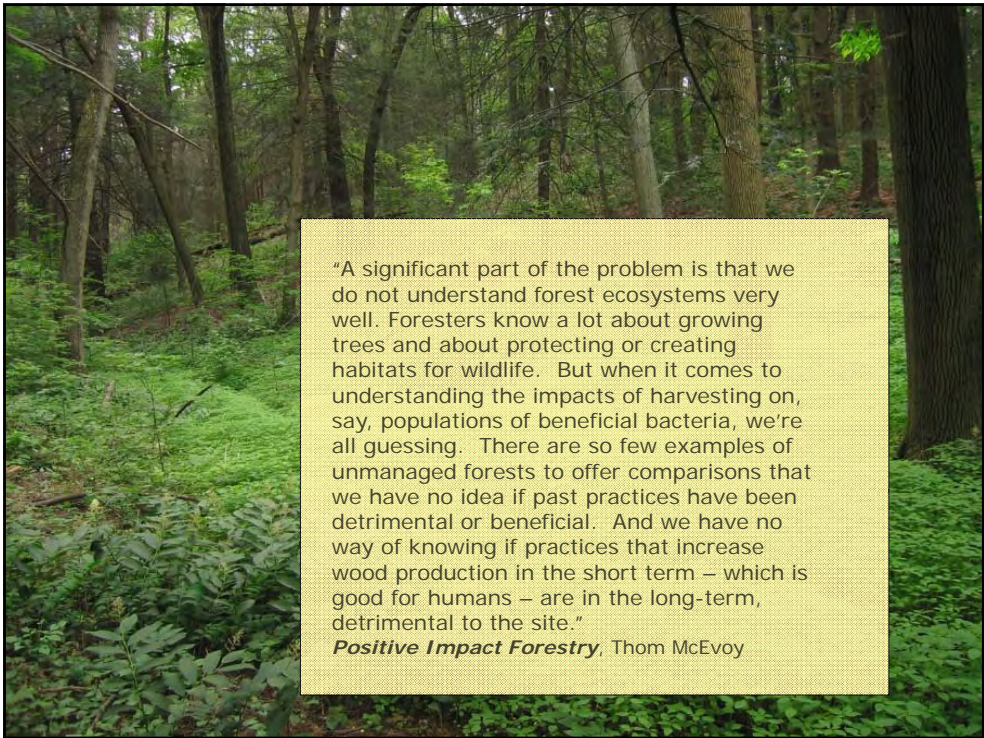




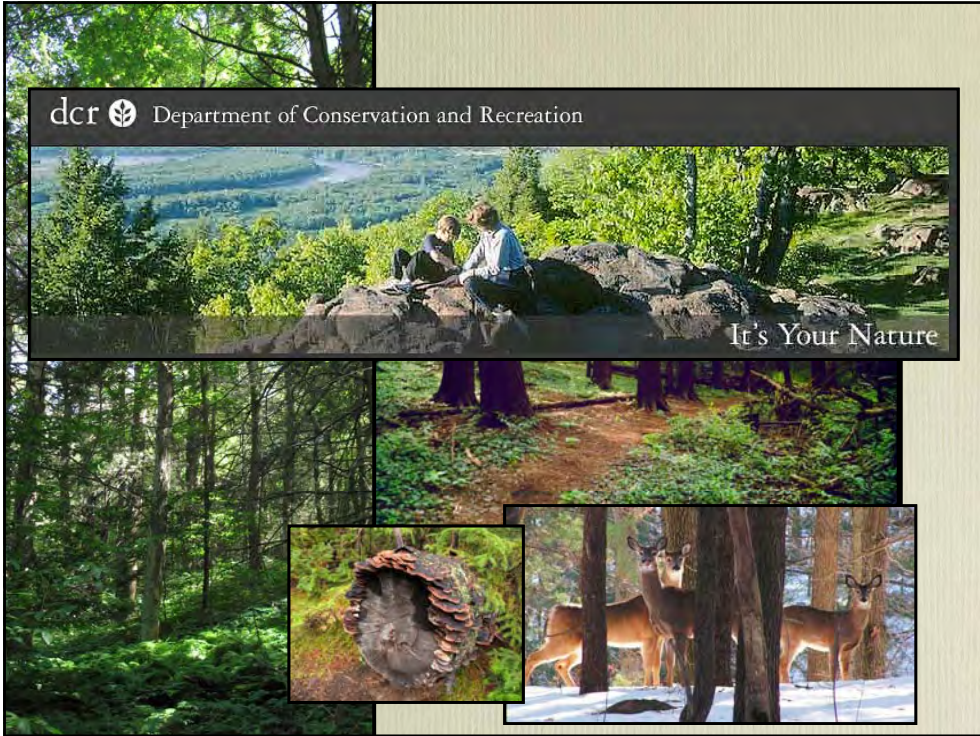
After a century of protection, new challenges to the integrity of our state forest lands from habitat loss, invasive species, climate change, pollution and energy extraction policies must be boldly addressed.



"A significant part of the problem is that we do not understand forest ecosystems very well. Foresters know a lot about growing trees and about protecting or creating habitats for wildlife. But when it comes to understanding the impacts of harvesting on, say, populations of beneficial bacteria, we're all guessing. There are so few examples of unmanaged forests to offer comparisons that we have no idea if past practices have been detrimental or beneficial. And we have no way of knowing if practices that increase wood production in the short term – which is good for humans – are in the long-term, detrimental to the site."

Positive Impact Forestry, Thom McEvoy





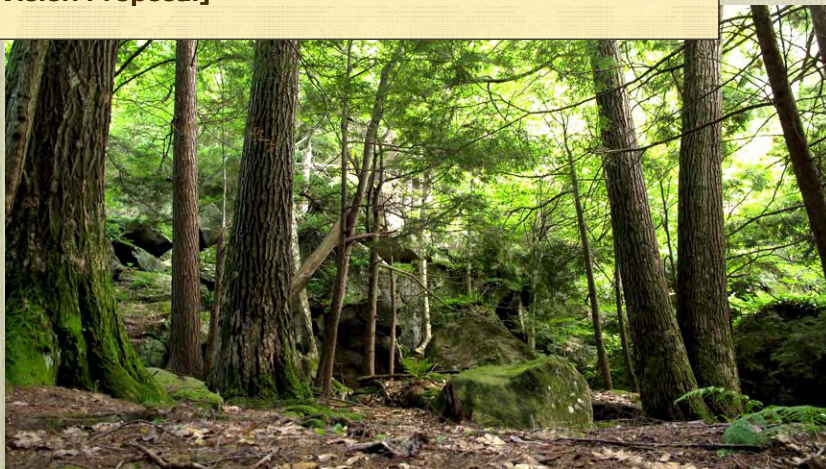
conservation community. The old philosophy of conserving biological diversity one endangered species at a time is being swept away. In its place has come the belief that our true goal needs to be the protection and restoration of the natural integrity of the fabric of life, and that this can be achieved in large part by creating ecological reserve systems that allow nature to operate in its own way, in its own place, and in its own time."

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Stephen Trombulak, Middlebury College
its own place, and in its own time."

Massachusetts public forests provide benefits that private lands cannot or will not:

- **wilderness**
- **protected old growth forests**
- ***large unfragmented blocks* for protection of biodiversity**
- **wildlife habitat**
- **watershed protection & clean air**
- **refuge for Massachusetts endangered species**
- **public recreational access**
- **permanent protection from development**
- **carbon uptake and storage**
- **resiliency to disturbances & climate change**

**"Forests have developed over millions of years and do not require human intervention to function or regenerate. Forest cutting techniques in recent years have been refined in attempts to retain more of the natural forest ecological functions and characteristics, but there is no technique that has been shown to fully replicate the complete range of ecological function provided by an unmanaged forest."
[AGS Vision Proposal]**



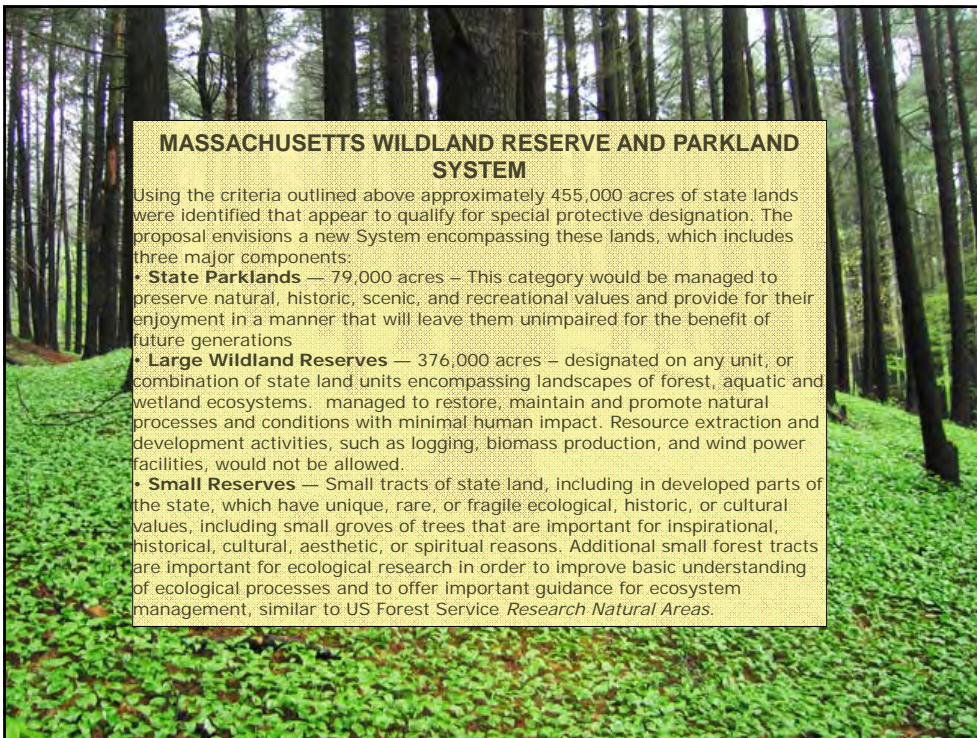


We added to the **Scientific Criteria** used in the EOEAA Reserves selection process and proceeded without imposing any arbitrary ceiling or floor for Reserve acreage.

Our Reserves Proposal includes **Social Values** as reflected in Forest Futures discussions, and as found in statutory authority for creating the Commonwealth's urban and state forest parks.

Additional Reserves high priority site selection criteria:

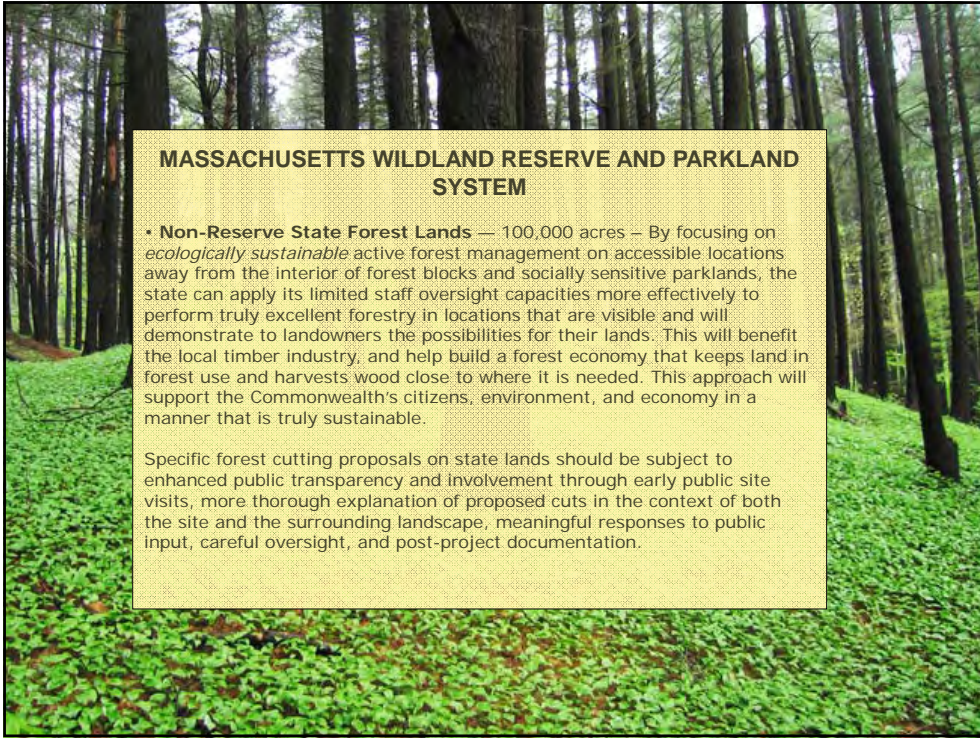
- **substantial representation within each ecoregion**
- **redundancy, geographically dispersed Reserves to distribute risk**
- **anticipation of future impacts of climate change on existing ecosystems**
- **contribution to carbon sequestration and mitigation of climate change**
- **parklands protection from commercial harvesting**
- **large blocks of contiguous forests ranked highest because the integrity and value of natural areas increases significantly with size**



MASSACHUSETTS WILDLAND RESERVE AND PARKLAND SYSTEM

Using the criteria outlined above approximately 455,000 acres of state lands were identified that appear to qualify for special protective designation. The proposal envisions a new System encompassing these lands, which includes three major components:

- **State Parklands** — 79,000 acres — This category would be managed to preserve natural, historic, scenic, and recreational values and provide for their enjoyment in a manner that will leave them unimpaired for the benefit of future generations
- **Large Wildland Reserves** — 376,000 acres — designated on any unit, or combination of state land units encompassing landscapes of forest, aquatic and wetland ecosystems; managed to restore, maintain and promote natural processes and conditions with minimal human impact. Resource extraction and development activities, such as logging, biomass production, and wind power facilities, would not be allowed.
- **Small Reserves** — Small tracts of state land, including in developed parts of the state, which have unique, rare, or fragile ecological, historic, or cultural values, including small groves of trees that are important for inspirational, historical, cultural, aesthetic, or spiritual reasons. Additional small forest tracts are important for ecological research in order to improve basic understanding of ecological processes and to offer important guidance for ecosystem management, similar to US Forest Service *Research Natural Areas*.



MASSACHUSETTS WILDLAND RESERVE AND PARKLAND SYSTEM

• **Non-Reserve State Forest Lands** — 100,000 acres — By focusing on *ecologically sustainable* active forest management on accessible locations away from the interior of forest blocks and socially sensitive parklands, the state can apply its limited staff oversight capacities more effectively to perform truly excellent forestry in locations that are visible and will demonstrate to landowners the possibilities for their lands. This will benefit the local timber industry, and help build a forest economy that keeps land in forest use and harvests wood close to where it is needed. This approach will support the Commonwealth's citizens, environment, and economy in a manner that is truly sustainable.

Specific forest cutting proposals on state lands should be subject to enhanced public transparency and involvement through early public site visits, more thorough explanation of proposed cuts in the context of both the site and the surrounding landscape, meaningful responses to public input, careful oversight, and post-project documentation.



MASSACHUSETTS WILDLAND RESERVE AND PARKLAND SYSTEM

IMPLEMENTATION

These actions can be implemented administratively within the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. However, stronger, permanent protection would be provided through state legislation authorizing an official State Wildland Reserves and Parklands System.

The legislation would set clear criteria, administrative authority, management standards, and public process for establishing, modifying, and managing these areas.