

The Forest Futures Visioning Process Technical Steering Committee disseminated Draft Recommendations to the public seeking feedback. The comment period closed on February 22, 2010. One opportunity to comment was through public forums where an overview of the recommendations was given by the TSC followed by questions and facilitated small group discussions. This document compiles the facilitator's notes reflecting comments, suggestions, concerns, etc. from the small group discussions held in **North Adams on February 6, 2010.**

Notes from North Adams Forum February 6, 2010

General Vision/Process:

- Why is there no one on the TSC from the forestry industry?
- Will any of the provisions proposed affect town owned lands, town roads through state lands and local authority to decide how to manage the town forests?
- Report calls for flexibility (adaptive management), but seems rigid itself.
- Trails are needed for fire protection. Will these plans allow fire fighters to get in?
- Need a definition of a stakeholder.
- Need a range of options to meet multiple interests.
- Huge amount of damage from ice storm – has been no attention to forests (at least along the highways) – what does TSC report say about this?
- Tourism – did TSC have a tourism representative? Are there figures that were reviewed?
- Good intentions, but politics in Boston overtakes good forest management. Should be left to the foresters and good silviculture practices.
- Will this document be voted on by citizens?
- Concerned that the recommendations will be implemented by special interest board or groups.
- Overregulation
- Massachusetts used to be among the top ten maple producers. Now, it is in the top twenty. There is no mention of maple syrup production in the recommendations.
- Thanks for all the hard work done here!
- It's wonderful that such an extensive planning process is underway for the forests
- There needs to be more recognition of other forest products like maple syrup
- Can you post the PPT Presentation on-line?
- How was the TSC formed?
- Concern about TSC. When you said experts sought out you did not mention anyone from the (forest products/timber) industry in TSC. Concerned industry not represented in this process. Concerns about future access to forests for industry.
- Are there any land owners on the TSC?
- I am the President of the Mass Wood Producers Association. I asked to be in the TSC. The stakeholders who live, works on the forests were not invited. I am one of the descendants of the pilgrims. My family has been in the timber industry for years - I am the 28th generation in the woods since the pilgrims. I believe that none of this is going to happen unless the legislature votes on the law and enforces the law that is already on the books.
- I want to know if any of these proposed changes affected the town of New Ashford and mount Greylock on Route 7. People are concerned if there are any private lands or roads maintained by the town that will be affected by the reservation/reserves? We don't want loss of revenue from

private land taken off the tax base. Loss of tax revenue. We also don't want to lose any roads from the towns. State's energy policy is moving to green energy –we don't want to see windmills in the forests.

- If this is a vision for the next 100 years, I am concerned about our energy needs. We are going to have a need for energy that has not been addressed in these recommendations. The state forests are huge and you want to make them bigger. Is there anyone with energy expertise on the TSC? Is there anyone looking at the forests' potential to help generate energy? What about using open land in forest areas for wind farms? There is such potential here and energy is going to be such a huge problem in the future. There are more opportunities in public lands than in private lands.
- I would like to have a definition of stakeholder.
- I thought this was a cool group. As a landowner, I am glad to hear the view point of industry, even though I disagree.
- We need to have representation from the forest industry on the TSC.
- A state forester left 4 feet of slash. I went all the way up to the DCR chief forester and got it cleared. People live there and walk there. It is also a fire hazard. The person in charge was a private licensed forester. I am over six feet. I can't walk over 4-foot of slash. I'd like to see a better DCR process for overseeing private foresters.
- I did not expect to hear so much support from pro-harvesting here today.
- What I saw in the plan was very scary. Majority of property in our tax base would be taken away. You are not providing for jobs and income for citizens.

Recommendation #1 – Ecosystem Services Model

- Need detail list of all the ecosystem services in report

Recommendation #2 – Elevated Role for MA Forests in Commonwealth Environmental Decision Making Process

Recommendation #3 – Policies for Privately Owned Forests

- Requiring certified foresters to approve cutting plans will extract a large fee from private landowners. Requiring certified foresters just substitutes for DCR foresters.
- Concerned and confused – cutting plans must be approved by a licensed forester?
- Less DCR land for cutting – more demand for cutting on private land – if you add costs for hiring forester more will sell their land for developer.
- I am a Licensed Forester in 2 states (not MA) – DCR oversight should be enough.
- I am a land owner in Chapter 61 – I do my own firewood,
- Firewood has pathetically low value as it is – should not add another cost by requiring a licensed forester for cutting plan
- Requiring a licensed forester takes land owner's rights away – the current way is just fine – DCR Forester reviews it.
- Tax credits as incentives are a poor way to do incentives. Landowners are "land rich" and "cash poor" – won't work.
- Chapter 61 is a huge tax benefit.
- Without Chapter 61 – landowners could not hold on to their land at all – please don't add more expenses like a licensed forester.
- Only protect ecosystem services with a licensed forester? Can you explain how that's relevant?
- Reasoning is that it provides consumer protection.

- Licensed foresters are not relevant to protect ecosystem services – also cost is a huge issue with private foresters – even \$1,000 is a lot of money compared to what is gained from a harvest.
- Issue on private land – working on small scale – what is a commercial harvest? My cuts get thrown in with the large-scale cuts – one size does not fit all here.
- When you say “small openings” what do you mean...what is considered small?
- Recommendation re: licensed forester - Private landowners: been cutting for 30 years and recommendation says have to turn it over to a forester – he’s been doing it free for family and friends, not charging for it. He has a right to do this work, even though he’s not a licensed forester.
- Recommendation re: minimize fragmentation – are you going to stick your nose in every landowners business?
- Cutting plan signed by forester is a good safety for sign off..... but state is overseeing anyway, so why need that?
- What is the definition of Private Land? Who does this touch?
- Carrots are better than sticks – incentives are needed for private land owners
- An educational component is lacking – it is very restrictive. Massachusetts has the strictest regulations in the country. Unless we educate people, we’ll end up with high end seasonal homes.
- Re additional taxes – requiring land owners to spend more money on licensing.
- Stay out of private land.
- What do land owners get out of this?
- More education-less regulation. I just did the Stewardship Plan –and loved their education part.
- is there a reward for people who do good forestry?
- What are the benefits for land owners?
- Lacking an Education component
- Too much regulation already
- Stay out of private ownerships
- Don’t want any more regulation on private land because it just increases the expense
- Recently did a DCR stewardship plan for their property and loved the education part of the process
- Is there a certification opportunity for private landowners to increase opportunity for value added income for forest products?
- You want private licensed foresters to sign off on plans. This severely ties private landowners’ hands because it takes away a percentage of their income from crops, by adding to the costs.

Recommendation #4 – Landscape Planning Model

- One of the October Mountain harvests on the Appalachian Trail was a more selective harvest, about 5 years ago. It came back as a different kind of forest which is fine – intelligent management, smaller cut. DCR did not do well engaging those interested in the land for recreation, etc. It is not DCR’s job to provide a cash crop, but to preserve the landscape. The Appalachian Trail is likely to pass through all 3 zones. The Trail management agreement may be a way to make it less scary for some.
- Am surrounded by DCR land and some time, will give up to the push for more and more parkland.
- Western MA has the biggest % of the reserves. Easy to buy out commercial interests here.
- Need bigger balance on woodlands. If want reserves, go to Yellowstone or Vermont. State needs the money so why take it for reserves?
- There are 2 parts to the state when DCR looks at zoning. Okay for parkland eastern MA. 30s bought land Savoy so could be flooded and transport water under the Conn. River to the Quabbin. Savoy ended up with no tax base. West of the Conn. River not the same as the rest of the state.

- Acquisition of land: responsibility to taxpayer, take land from logging. This year with stopped logging lost \$1 million of work and no DCR foresters laid off and they have no sales to manage. Paying people to do nothing and taking land out of the taxbase. P.I.L.O.T. a lot of baloney.
- Management areas in the future take into account Natural Heritage classifications? (Yes answer given)
- Supports the new structure of DCR lands into three zones
- You are locking up too much land in the old growth reserves in Western, MA and there will be problems if you do not tend to these forests
- Are the small patch reserves part of the 90,000-120,000 acres to be allocated to reserves zone?
- Please clarify acquisition priorities.
- The draft recommendations mention acquisitions for the reserves, but what about parkland and woodlands?
- Wind power is prohibited in reserves, but not addressed for the other two zones. What is the plan for that?
- If we take 80% of land for forests, that should not be locked up because it will be no good to anybody. Don't lock in forests by law.
- Land should not be locked up.
- Need to look at the proportions of the zones in different parts of the state.

Recommendation #5 – Management for Reserves

- No harvesting, preemptive logging – doesn't see doing nothing is right for reserves. Doing nothing gets you poor quality trees, insect infestations, invasives, etc.
- Restoration part of reserves is important.
- Need to look at this scientifically to see if reserves will work.
- Concerned about snowmobiles in reserves – goes against quietness.
- I have been in forests that have been left alone for 100 years – there are all ages of trees and understory – straight and dead trees for wildlife and soil; millions of organisms in a forest – hands-off approach for certain areas is good for preserving genetic diversity – we can learn a lot from watching reserves.
- I agree.
- When do you go in to manage reserves? Big fires – there are a few in the Berkshires.
- What is the threshold to trigger human management?
- I work my land but believe in reserves – but percentages of reserves here [in recommendations] is too high. This shrinks the amount of wood products that are available – and it is already very restrictive.
- This will affect Berkshire County more than anywhere else.
- Small towns in western MA are supposed to be paid for timber cutting – this will be gone. Some wood is being taken off state land – these people spend money in our small towns. This is not inconsequential. Timber payments and economic spending in these small towns is very important.
- Description of reserves...15,000 acres or more – this will eliminate many areas – I am unclear how areas of less than 15,000 acres would be designated.
- Not against reserves with a caveat...today's landscape is different than it was – it was mostly open farmland – most areas always logged. Everything comes down to finances – you're taking jobs and money away from rural areas. Sawmills are already leaving. DCR doesn't do anything.
- MA gets a lot of income from forests – maple syrup, forest product processing – without forestry there will be less jobs and people will not have the kind of life they now enjoy.
- There is an assumption that if there are more reserves – tourism will increase – many people question this.

- Been a logger for 30 years in a lot of areas. This winter, a lot of ice dams in the parks. The DCR lands are devastated because prohibition on cleaning up. There are valuable logs down that any logger would bid on. Not good any time tie down with regulations. Any tree-hugger if they had damage in their own backyard would clean it up. None of the land should be locked up so can address damage.
- No allowance for DCR to step in if infestation occurs to protect abutting parcels and contain the spreading.
- William Cronin once wrote that there are no virgin forests. And so we must start now and rebuild from here.
- Forests have been altered so it is too simple to say that we leave it alone – our influence is so significant that it is not possible. There is no way to predict the result. Too much land/acreage has been set aside for this [not knowing the result]
- It is exciting that we are starting again, given how we have messed with the forest.
- Forty thousand trees were cut in Worcester because of the beetle infestation – it is very important to protect abutting parcels.
- I'm worried about the legal protection part. What if we need parts of the land ten years from now? Then what? They have been locked in by legal protection.
- Who determines what is Natural? And how do we fit into the rest of the ecosystem?
- Re large reserves – you need to reach out to towns regarding their development plans in rural communities – these recommendations will have a huge impact on small rural communities.
- Why no allowance in reserves for dealing with insects and disease to protect abutting properties?
- It is exciting to see inclusion of the opportunity to follow natural process in the forest
- Legal protection is not needed for reserves, would rather see only policy protection
- Who determines what is “natural”?
- DCR should reach out to towns where reserves are proposed to see if that meets with the towns comprehensive plans, which were also funded by the state a few years ago.

Recommendation #6 – Management Approaches for Parklands

- In parkland and old growth areas, over the last 50 years, the exotics have quadrupled. No one does anything because costs money. If take more land for parkland and do nothing...

Recommendation #7 – Management Approaches for Woodlands

- Concerns – this is just a small part of DCR land, small part of all forests, makes sense to have management.
- What happened to the rest of the silvicultural text book? Why only uneven aged management? Is it all about aesthetics? Do you think if you cut light – everyone will leave you alone? Not likely to happen.
- What is the scientific defense of shifting to mostly uneven aged management?
- Would the actively managed woodlands include grassland? If so, bear in mind, grassland is not available to harvesting.

Recommendation #8 – DCR Organizational Structure, Decision Making and Planning

- It is wonderful that a plan is looked at with all its subsets.

Recommendation #9 – Improving Public Process

- Need more information and transparency of the process of decision making about state forests.
- Need a better process for appeals to rulings by DCR.
- Concern over notification process. All licensed harvesters should receive a written notice of hearings and public meetings.
- Re Public education – hard to find information on this meeting. I called the Mayor's Office and they didn't know about it. And that's just on this forum – there is a lack of information overall. Nobody knows what is going on.
- Public education is critical both for the people and for DCR. When there are issues in a neighborhood, no one is told what to do or what some options might be. Misinformation is everywhere – no one representation.
- DCR needs to be proactive and positive – learn from the Food & Agriculture Department. DCR does not have an active role explaining timber harvest, and management of natural resources.
- If you don't happen to see a posting re cutting, you have no idea it's happening. A public hearing and site visits are required before a cut, but if you miss the posting of when & where, you can't respond to it.
- Does DCR have an active mailing list? It could be a way for them to communicate by letter to land owners and abutters.
- DCR needs to have classes in the woods.
- "No Child Left Inside"
- It was hard to find out about this meeting, even the Mayor's office did not know about it
- Need better notice procedures
- There is a lack of public knowledge about forestry
- Public education is critical
- DCR needs to be proactive about forestry with better education around timber sales and classes for children
- No children left inside programs
- Does DCR have a mailing list of all forest landowners in the Berkshires?
- We want transparency and notification from DCR so that public knows what's happening. We landowners want greater information for everybody. Chapter 132 – pass and enforce it. Pass the pending legislation.

Recommendation #10 – Resources Needed to Implement the TSC Recommendations

- Who will pay for buying land? Who will pay for another layer of bureaucracy – Commissioner of Forest Stewardship? Only ½% of land is cut to produce money.
- Where would future acquisition funding come from? I'm concerned that there is not a lot of manpower from the state right now. What will happen when there is more forest land for the state to manage?
- Where is the funding coming from to pay for land purchases and other proposals in the recommendations?
- Every dollar earned from public forests needs to be reinvested in to management of the forest and the public roads which are such a mess. They currently have no money. A woman fell from a horse and broke her back recently. It took seven hours to get to her because of trails and roads being inaccessible.

FSC Certification

- FSC Certification? What is it?

- FSC is a marketing tool for industry to do more harvesting – not valid – no one looks at it or sees it in Home Depot – it's a waste of taxpayer money.
- If we can use it for local value-added products – this is good.
- Never seen any demonstration that landowner benefits from it.
- I think having third-party certification is a good idea. If concern is poor harvesting – then this addresses it. Economics of FSC are poor.

Biomass

- There are 16,800 people employed in forest products industry and in secondary manufacturing – what we do will have a huge impact on jobs – especially in the western counties.
- Timber harvesting and biomass plants aren't aligned. If state does harvesting for biomass – it won't change how state harvesting occurred.
- Biomass materials are mostly recycled wood.
- Energy and biomass: if don't allow them or wind towers, who will we invade next? Yemen?
- What is the definition of "biomass"?
- We need more information on biomass – not just firewood. How sustainable is it?

ATV/Recreation

- Four wheelers cause destruction and damage on forest roads and trails.
- There is a need for trail maintenance, and since DNR is unable to provide it, it falls to local groups to do that. Sometimes these crews need four wheelers to get into some of the areas.

Management/Cutting/Harvesting

- Need to have forest manage to avoid losses from natural disasters like ice storm damage.
- I am pro-harvesting; the majority of state land is out of timber production.
- Not actively managing the forest will lead to degradation of tree quality and wildlife.
- Legislation is on the books that all forestland purchased by the state must be used for timber production.
- Need to manage for more timber production not less. This will create jobs.
- Species like Norway Spruce requires a patch cut.
- Deer herds and other species dropped off when agriculture gone, so no habitat. Should create habitat outside farming with good silviculture. Deer recommendations are not proportional in this area. What happens when you don't create good habitat through (management), don't get young species.
- Been logging Norway Spruce for 10 years. First job did 20 years ago was not designed to be re-generated. Could have done it well – it is the greatest cash crop in MA. Policy in Boston to eliminate non-native species led to all the clear cuts. Could have bulldozed scarification. It's worse not to cut – looks bad, was planted in the 1930s.
- Mismanaged the clear cuts, could have been done in increments, better scale of the clear cuts. Could have done strips and blocks and regenerate, rather than put out bids for 1 million board feet.
- Clear cut is a tool all need. Prior owners of his land high-graded it and have a lot of diseased trees to deal with. A lot of people look at a seed cut as a clear cut, but never come back 2 to 4 years later.
- Does clear cut open up more to exotics? You can deal with exotics, but it takes money. Need good "TSI" to weed out, and has not been addressed.
- Some of the land the state buys, like dairy herds – if the state buys it, put a CR on it so it can be used for timber harvesting

- WIP program from the US Govt: a year later, someone cut the whole area.
- Missing component: some people think cutting trees bad and need education.
- If you leave harvesting alone and make it worthwhile for selling timber, you'll have forested lands.
- When they planted trees, we saw wildlife declining. Where there were clear cuts we saw more wildlife. It (clear cutting) is a good thing in some places. Forests should be managed instead of letting trees just grow and now there's nothing underneath them.
- Forests must be managed without sitting dormant. Trees will grow better and more animals and ecosystem will improve. Industry is not well represented as well as it should be.
- I am a private landowner and my property abuts state land. I have 10 acres. We need to have access to 4-wheel-drives vehicles. We are the ones who keep the trails open. We have people volunteer to keep the trails open for DCR. It's going to be taken away. Once I cut a tree on the trail. For cutting one tree they (foresters) cut the other trees down and cleared it up. Don't they know a year before what to cut?
- Anyone gone by a yarding area? Everything is all over on the side of the road. They must clear up the yard, stumps etc. timber on the ground will re-grow. Stumps take 30yrs to rot. Some twigs and biomass better left underground.
- In our area, golden rod never surfaced until the road was cut. So the land has got to be managed.
- Carbon sequestration – when you are harvesting timber, you are sequestering carbon.
- When you cut, more grows. In Savoy there is an invasive forest -- exotic species that are dying because in lots of places they were planted too close together. They should have been thinned.
- My concern is with forest management, and getting back to that. Clear trails. If managed right, trees will not be damaged.
- In the future, divide into half and half and have more give and take between the two groups (harvesting and conservation).

Industry/Economics

- The timber industry is a black mark. All they want to do is come onto state lands, cut the trees and make money.
- Many have a low opinion of the forest products industry because of the mess they leave behind.
- Those who work the forests care the most about the forest, and they depend upon maintaining it for their jobs.
- Increasing timber production from state forests will create jobs
- This country was built on timber.
- Everyone here demands product to use.
- The whole wood production industry from harvesting to production is the only industry that appreciates because the trees are growing – the only industry that works with nature, and we are trying to shut it down.
- Timber is an agricultural product, like a farmer farming.
- Everybody's concerned about jobs. Why take away jobs?
- Industry is put as a black mark to forest management. We probably care more about environment because we live in it, we work in it; I am getting emotional.
- In 1920s and 1930s a law was passed providing for land for the timber industry; then along came chapter 132 on cutting practices and DCR is supposed to be on us. Now they want to make major variations on the law by having private licensed foresters involved. The last violation was by private foresters. Why are we reinventing the wheel? Why do we need DCR foresters if we have licensed private foresters? We want to take care of our forests. Every tree we cut we plant 2. Private foresters, recommend that you forget it. 3yrs ago Bob O'Connor and a few others and us set aside 52,000 acres of DCR and other lands. Why are we going back in 3yrs? Jobs and the

economy are two big things. We only log less than 1% of the timber logged by the state. We can go up to 4%. This is \$1 billion revenue for the state.

- Landowners I know are concerned that industry wants to rape public lands. I know people who have such a low opinion of the industry.
- Timber harvests near our property. There's a huge mud hole. Unbelievably messy. Public road not maintained because of mess. If the industry would take better care when they left, there would be more positive views.
- So what you are saying is that you are not 100% opposed to harvesting, but you are opposed to the way it is done? We in the industry agree with you – one bad apple spoils the entire bunch.
- I'm in agreement with a lot of the timber industry ideas – I live in Florida. I am concerned about the care and feeding DCR gives to the forests. I have not seen state foresters in my area in my lifetime, although I have seen some signs of them.

Other

- Most forests in western part of the state – windmills will fragment much of this part of the state – greatest threat to forests in Berkshires (roads, blasting, flicker, lights, heights, interruption of bird migration)
- Agenda 21 from 1992 Bush signed, followed by Clinton Executive Order, and the next Bush, and this Administration too: most of the points in the recommendations (follow) Agenda 21 which is a document for the global elite, a UN-written document on sustainability, covers reductions in property rights, then elimination of all private property, and shows MA as a recreation area with defined population centers and depopulation. Trends in reports with 98% accuracy for the Hudson Valley show we will be a 3rd world country in 5-10 years because manufacturing is leaving the country. So, we'll have plenty of time to recreate then....
- Need to have a good balance on both public and private land to pay for.
- DCR foresters are willing to be helpful
- Uneducated severe environmentalists don't have a clue how to manage wild areas when they don't live it or pay taxes on it.
- Been in the woods where damage – how come no one is cleaning it up – this ruins the land and valuable timber. Decision making is in the wrong hands. Lack of education.
- People coming into our home are from way outside, they have a lot of money, buy big properties for McMansions, don't manage, and bring in invasives, then complain about the bears but don't want hunters on their land. Decision-making needs to be more local by sections of the state by people who understand. Otherwise, lobbied.
- DCR trying to address problem of people coming in and buying big tracts as conservationists because cutting trees is bad. Rethink this because there is an education component. Buy land, then take a course, pass a test, so educated on what forestry management is if want to buy land. Focus the education for people who are getting the control of the forest. (Comment: its their land....)
- There's nothing that can be done on public lands without DCR regulations. We can't go in and do whatever we want. 4-wheelers wreck carpenter road. It will never regenerate. So much damage. We are so upset.
- I lean toward wind energy – we are from the town of Florida and three quarters of us voted for it three years ago and it is working well.
- I am concerned about the condition of the trails, especially in the case of forest fires when firefighters have to get in.
- Public lands are for the public.
- Carbon is stored in wood products that are made from harvested wood.
- The last 5 violations on state lands involved certified foresters.

- There is a growing need for energy. We should consider putting wind turbines at appropriate sites on public lands.
- Our community wants to approve a wind park in our town, but it is outsiders who are blocking wind development.
- I live surrounded by DCR lands, and have not seen a DCR forester in 70 years