

Public Workshop #7 – 12/13/10, Greenfield Community College - Downtown Center, Greenfield, 6:30pm – 8:30pm

Approximately 75 people in attendance

As a part of the Fall 2010 Public Workshop series regarding DCR's new Landscape Designations for DCR State and Urban parks, participants divided into breakout groups to have conversations and provide feedback on the draft selection criteria and draft management guidelines that have been proposed. What follows are the notes taken on flip charts by each group, recording the discussions held. In some instances, a little additional context not originally recorded on the flip chart is provided to help explain the note – this information appears in italics.

### **Notes from Group #1**

Parkland criteria about water needs to look at ecological characteristics not involving people (to protect sensitive areas - rare & endangered, biological diversity)

Commercial harvesting should not occur in parklands

Trails

- Density of trails (recreation infrastructure) need to be defined – DCR needs to describe
- Trail densities needs to look at different uses (hiking vs. Mt bike & OHV)
- Need to know who will maintain trails, & if volunteers, what is their priority
- Need to consider “unofficial trails” that are existing (not on DCR Map)

Will Western MA be treated unfairly because less people, less trails, less \$ & maintenance?  
(less recreation on Reserves & Western MA will have more Reserves)

Can we have new trails on Reserves ?

Reserve Advisory Committee needs trail & recreation experts

Already enough checks on creating new trails  
(Don't need new Reserve Advisory committee check )

What happens when ecological functions change over time to 3 zone designations? (climate change, invasives, diseases - may need to re-evaluate)

Reserve trails may not be in best locations, may want to move them

Should be able to zone all zones in one property, if appropriate

When does trail maintenance become soil stabilization?

Invasives should be mapped, starting with reserves then parklands then woodlands

In woodlands, active management includes removal of invasives

Restrict clear cutting on woodlands, should be selective

The way logging looks is very important

OHVs

- Should be areas designated for all uses - including OHV's
- Don't reduce OHV trails there are 30,000 registered users
- Focus on reducing illegal OHV use
- Need to educate users about erosion of trails
- OHV trails should connect to long distance trails, should be loops – problem if can't ride on public fire roads

Mountain biking if only on designated trails – current policy is open unless closed  
(new policy is more restricted)

OHV Clubs need to help EPO's on checking registrations

## **Notes from Group #2**

Access for EMS – proper emergency planning

Better designed OHV trails

Need better signage on trails

Want low impact access to continue in Reserves

Utilize "Tread lightly" (DCR is a member) organization to help us with signage

Trails need to be numbered – illegal trails cause problem because EMT can't find injured person when they call 911

What happens if we lose OHV trails – will they be replaced with new trails?

Land should be open to everyone – bird watching to OHV

Hikers should pay fair share like OHV (*suggestion that a fee should be charged, akin to OHV registration fees*)

Trail density – should be a difference between gravel road vs. a trail when calculating density

Why can't mountain bikers use certain roads in the forest? Open unless posted as closed

## **Notes from Group #3**

*Facilitator Note: This group held a variety of opinions with no strong consensus - there was one individual continually expressing a strong opinion. As the group allowed, all comments were recorded.*

## Guidelines

### Woodlands

Commercial wind & other energy → Article 97 too restrictive in excluding energy development.  
(*The participant expressing this opinion believed that our state lands should be looked to as a place to provide alternative energy such as wind.*)

Article 97 is okay in energy development choices in State Lands (*The person expressing this opinion believed the opposite of the individual above – and felt that state lands should not be ‘exploited’ for energy production.*)

Forest should not be grown to produce wasteful biomass/energy production

Manage for forest diversity

Commercial uses – No commercial activity at all on State Lands (*one participants opinion*)

### Parklands

Invasive species control – shouldn't be restricted – should be controlled

No Wind energy

### Reserves

Concerned that Reserves are not afforded same management (ie control of pests) as other zones (pg 30 woodlands) – Control pests and invasive species in Reserves.

Concerned with new trail construction in Reserves – should all be but prohibited

## Criteria

### Woodlands

Selection should be done with town input, for those that are on watershed lands

Watershed lands should not be considered for woodlands

### Reserves

Confusing terms such as Redundancy should be defined. Not understood

## **Notes from Group # 4**

### Management Guidelines

Not in favor of the cutting of trees on DCR property

Thinning not clear-cutting (Timber stand improvements (TSI))

(*Facilitator Note: The majority of the group was in favor of forest management. One individual was not but then said some thinning was ok but not clear-cutting*)

Logging is important for wildlife

Sometimes clear cutting is important as well

Harvesting is important for the local economy, maintains the diversity of the forest

Do not agree with the 60% - 40% allocation with only 40% of DCR property dedicated to woodlands (should be reversed)

“I comment to keep it 60 – 40”

Where does the 15% of the weight of the forest saw logs to biomass fuel derived? How will it be monitored if there is a specific percentage?

Concern about harvesting timber for biomass fuel

Concerns about maintaining access for fire suppression if fire roads grow up and are not maintained in reserves

Concern that reserves will not be accessible the public in the future (hunting, other recreational uses)

Concern about commercial activities on DCR lands (communication sites, wind power)

Not clear about how these commercial activities are compatible within DCR Parklands and Woodlands

OHV's – fine filter criteria should be worded the same for reserves as it is for parklands and woodlands

Is there any discussion in these difficult times to look at work programs for the parks like the CCC program (good for stimulus, jobs, work, help for the parks)

Will there be other representation on the Science Advisory Committee other than scientists? How about other users that have vested interest in the parks

## **Notes from Group #5**

Rreserves category based on nature preservation – water, birds

Adapt nomenclature to modern era

“Reserves” creates confusion w/ reservation

Will DCR designations effect local ordinances? (ex: elevation)

How will this process effect private owners?

Geographic imbalance of potential reserves & access

Concern about loss of local voice re: designation & use of land

Desire to see Reserves be restricted in use

Four categories of use - foot, hoof, wheel, motor – recreational opportunities for everyone

Impact of activity, not inter user politics

Reserves do not have to be large, can exist within Parkland

Wilderness designation may affect recreational use. What is wilderness?

Concern re: unique resource protection in face of publicization

Maintenance of existing & new trails

\*Key to user happiness

Consideration of fish & wildlife, and other state landowners

Can private landowners designate their property under these categories?

Provide benefit eg. Chapter 61

Consult with con com or open space commission for landscale designation

Would existing events (eg: Greylock Ramble) be allowed to continue?

Would like to see them be able to continue

Take existing activities into consideration for designations

Snowmobile trail corridors remaining open

Concern about trail maintenance approval process under FRSAC

How to manage 100,000 acres of forest land & cutting?

Reforestation on woodlands after cutting

Protect existing trail networks in woodlands & follow up with loggers

Local input & notice re: logging

Who is on FRSAC, what skills do they have?

Local input, local input, local input

## **Notes from Group #6**

Difficult to manage 40% of land with existing staff – hire consultants 6,000/acres/year

This would help local economies

Consider wildlife habitat in addition to forest products

Concern about biodiversity in Reserves

Concern that larger openings will be needed to achieve habitat goals

Given complexity of nature will never know everything. Be wary of unintended consequences of management

Need to protect interior forests, prevent fragmentation

Link to adjacent non – state/private preserved lands

OHV's

- Limited places now, concern about losing access
- Economic impact riders bring
- Trail maintenance
- Could result in illegal use/ private land

Early successional – only state lands have long-term management opportunity

Planning process doesn't acknowledge the "unknowns". Importance of monitoring

Consider commercial harvesting in parklands. Not cost-effective though

Need to consider all currently existing trails. Need process to build new trails

Ecological characteristics – needs to be fully, broadly defined, explicitly defined

Invasives – important to manage but consider unintended consequences

## **Notes from Group #7**

### Management Guidelines

Silviculture/vegetation management

- Plantation removal - why? Age?  
Salvage/maintenance
- Invasive Species

Home fuel wood - allow in all (3) zones

Boundaries – marking/work with abutters to mark both sides of trees; boundary markers should be on state land, not abutting private land

Not looking for areas in woodlands for creation of Early Successional Habitat . \* Criteria by TSC did not intend this. Not a DCR land priority. Let DFW meet this need. Only on DCR land if DFW determines that more is needed.

Reserves

- Concern of ATV's & snowmobiles on Reserves
- Motorized vehicles should not be allowed on Reserves
- More signage/ enforcement re: prohibited activities needed

Fire/Safety Access - Personnel & slash concern (Enforcement & Powers)

Trail Use & Construction

Mountain biking (management guidelines vs. DCR current policy)

FRSAC – Include a Trails/ Passive Recreation Representative

Define Passive Recreation

More details needed – in documents & charts

Allow for (enough) parking on State land (at designated trail Heads)

(Problem with roadside parking on Private land)

Bio-diversity – all critical/selective criteria. How will biodiversity be determined? Need to consider genetic and other “within species” diversity

Invasive Species vs harvesting impacts

Are we selling off forests for income?

Stop all commercial harvesting on State land!

Dumping into cellarholes/ foundations (harvesting debris)

Use of chart is not specific enough (more details needed)

Harvesting should be allowed. Criteria & guidelines are further restricting use of MA DCR Forest Resources