

**DCR Forest Futures Implementation Spring Meetings
Landscape Designation Process
Meeting #1
Danvers, MA
May 24, 2011**

Small Group Notes

Note: These notes were prepared by the Massachusetts Office of Public Collaboration, who facilitated these meetings. Comments made by DCR staff at the meetings are indented. DCR added information shown in brackets after the meetings to address questions and provide context. All other comments were from public participants.

Group #1

Facilitator/Recorder: Bill Logue

EEA staff: Stephanie Cooper

- What protections will exist for animals and other creatures in the woodlands from harvest impacts?
 - Biomap 2 is used and Mass Natural Heritage program protections will be followed for species of special concern. **[For details, please see Final Draft Management Guidelines, p.36, <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/ld/mgmtguidelines.pdf>]**
- What changes/edits were made between the previous draft criteria and guidelines and the current draft? **[See handout “Key Changes in DCR Landscape Designation Management Guidelines <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/ld/ho3-ey%20management%20guideline%20changes.pdf>]**
- How will patch reserves be handled within other areas? DCR is focused on recreation and that can destroy lands, want more conservation. **[See Anticipated Question #8]**
- Do not want Georgetown-Rowley State Forest designated as woodlands – concerned about noise, destruction, impact on ability to see wildlife, impacts on erosion if cutting on hill adjacent to home, want it used for recreation
- Will trails in reserves be closed?
 - Trails will stay open, some might be relocated, they will be maintained **[See Anticipated Question #16]**
- Who will enforce plans and regulations?
 - Environmental police and rangers working within existing resources **[See Anticipated Question #18]**
- Don't have a problem with forestry, however leaving slash on the ground or out on trails creates problems for walking and horse riding
- Georgetown-Rowley State Forest should not be logged. The trees act as a buffer and sound barrier for homes along Interstate 95. It is full of wetlands, vernal pools and past logging had bad impacts and destroyed stone walls. ATVs are bad. Worried about skidders. Georgetown-Rowley State Forest should be used for recreational purposes.

- What is the economic rationale for harvesting inside of 495? It might be OK if it satisfies best practices but the revenue does not seem to justify the harm.
 - The state is not logging to make money although there is revenue and in-kind work. Inside of 495 it is to model demonstration forestry. DCR acknowledges there are two schools of thought 1) manage the forests 2) let them go without intervention.
- When forestry projects are complete trails should be restored
 - The guidelines for this should be in the contracts with harvesters
- Saying there is bad work that damages wildlife- why have any cutting?
 - Forestry should not damage wildlife **[DCR's new draft Woodland Guidelines have extensive safeguards to protect the natural resources on the harvest site including staff sign-offs, expert review, site walkovers and public input. A forest and park system with a balance of reserves and woodlands will provide a more diverse wildlife habitat.]**
- Is there a profit or loss on logging?
 - There is not a profit, not sure there is a loss either **[Revenue from a timber sale is not the reason to do logging. Forest management via harvesting is a tool for DCR to better manage the forest. DCR foresters do a wide variety of activities that do not involve managing timber sales. Some of those duties include forest inventories, boundary marking, encroachment monitoring, forest health surveys for insects, invasive species control, forest education and emergency response.]**
- Why the 60/40 split why not leave things as they are?
 - The Forest Futures Visioning Process was started as a result of controversy over forestry practices on DCR lands and the result were recommendations that it is important to have these three types of designations that prioritize values the properties are managed for and limit logging to woodlands **[See Anticipated Question #5]**
- Are there required buffer distances between logging and private property? **[Needs to be answered]**
- Georgetown-Rowley State Forest is not good for woodlands because there are limited access roads. Good logging only occurs with proper oversight from a forester and a good logger, does the state have the manpower to monitor logging? **[See Anticipated Question #18]**
- Georgetown-Rowley State Forest has vernal pools, a pump station well, and beavers. If it is logged there what will the impacts on water be? **DCR's Final Draft Management Guidelines for Woodlands - see <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/ld/mgmtguidelines.pdf> - include expanded best management practices and increased review and oversight requirements that are state-of-the-art and will adequately protect water resources during and after forest harvests.**
- The Willowdale Reserve may or may not be a problem, it has a history of active forest management. Will being a reserve limit activities? **[See Anticipated Questions #3, 11, 12, 15, 16]**It is a fragmented property with an active agricultural license on part of it so it should not all be a reserve. Will all reserves be managed in the same way? **[DCR tried to strike a**

balance among the three designations on the properties on the north shore. Willowdale had many attributes that were well-suited to a Reserve designation].

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- Will “beaver deceivers” be used in reserves to protect trails?
- Why not do tree farming for harvesting?
 - The Civil Conservation Corps in the 1930’s planted many of the plantations that were like tree farms. **[DCR does not believe establishing tree farms on state forests to provide wood products would make sense. Rather, we believe some harvesting on existing forests can achieve a variety of benefits including providing wood products].**
- Concerned that if log at Georgetown-Rowley State Forest the sound buffer to I-95 will be lost and concrete barrier will be put up. The forest is already mixed age, has wetlands, vernal pools
- The group was asked what their use of Georgetown-Rowley State Forest was.
 - Walking
 - Biking
 - Horse riding
 - View from home
- Logging may take only a few weeks but it takes years to recover from the damage from skidder tracks
- The noise and other impacts to wildlife will prevent enjoyment of the wildlife.
- There is a wildlife corridor at Georgetown-Rowley State Forest
- The clear cutting at Quabbin is an outrage, trees protect water
 - The Landscape Designation process is about changing forestry practices for the state parks system, using different practices and a shift in philosophy. **[Please see <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/watersupply/watershed/forestry.htm> for information about Division of Water Supply Protection forestry program]**
- Why do logging if there is no money in it?
 - Commissioner: DCR does not get the revenue. The state has an interest in supporting the industry and local economy. The Department of Agriculture notes that almost all wood products are imported into the state and 80% of land is in private hands. Recently met with loggers about woodland access. Going forward, forestry will be different with 1/3 acre openings, buffers to residential areas, do not want clear cuts and will have better management practices.
- Will Harold Parker Forest be different **[Harvesting has historically occurred at Harold Parker, and if finalized as a Woodland, harvesting would happen in the future under more restrictive guidelines – see <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/ld/mgmtguidelines.pdf>. See also Anticipated Question #3]**
- There should be reserves inside 128 – for example Middlesex Fells should be a patch reserve, colleges could use for research. [See Anticipated Question #8]

- If 80% of lands are in private hands why have Georgetown-Rowley State Forest as woodlands it should be recreational use which would provide the most benefit to the most people. The same should apply to Boxford State Forest.

Group #2

Facilitator/Recorder: Courtney Breese

DCR staff: Dave Goodwin, Tim Zelazo, Gary Briere

- Did DCR go to each site and examine them specifically?
 - No, but DCR developed a model to evaluate the properties that included a lot of detailed information (e.g. Biomap 2). Parkland was easiest in examining the density and use. We reviewed data and examined what was overlooked. Some staff went to some more remote areas to gather information etc.
- Blue Hills has not had a plant survey since 1896. We needed to know what was in the Middlesex Fells – that took eight years. It’s difficult that we don’t know all that’s there. I’m wondering if the patch reserve idea is still alive? **[See Anticipated Question #8]**
 - Regarding Blue Hills, note that the Resource Management Plan identified sensitive resource areas as “Zone 1,” **[See <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/rmp/rmp-bluehills.htm> which will also happen for the Fells - wee <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/rmp/rmp-midfells.htm>]** .
- What is the amount of forest acreage that would influence these categories? E.g. how many acres in Georgetown-Rowley would be the threshold to determine the categories?
 - Initially there was an acreage threshold for reserves **[Forest Futures Recommendations include a goal of 15,000-acre reserves]**, but, **[based on earlier public comments, DCR feels that]** some properties needed to be looked at differently, specifically in the east.
- I have concerns about the damage done to forests with logging.
 - Going forward, DCR will be demonstrating sustainable forestry practices under more stringent guidelines in state forests.
- What about properties near residential areas?
 - Boxford is a reserve, and there are areas of parkland carved out in other properties as well.
- Georgetown-Rowley and Harold Parker are in separate ecological land units. Georgetown-Rowley is designated as a woodland – It has a lot of roads, etc. I think this property was sacrificed due to the roads running through it.
- If further logging will take place, will that include adding access to I-95 at Georgetown-Rowley? **[DCR does not anticipate building new roads to support logging, rather existing roads would be used.]**
- I didn’t hear about this until this week, and I abut Georgetown-Rowley. Did abutters receive notice of these meetings? This affects them all.

- The meetings were publicized through press releases, website posting and emails to listserv subscribers, but there was not specific outreach to abutters.
- Is there a responsible form of logging? Square footage of areas, etc?
 - There are three levels of silviculture used: 1 – protecting property, 2-uneven-age forest, 3-even-age forest. We're looking at no more than a 1/3 acre opening. There could be up to 5 acre openings, but only in rare circumstances. The public will be involved in planning for cutting. DCR intends to select only highly-rated loggers when it does cut.
- I have seen logging around trails, blocking trails, destroying stone fences.
- Specific numbers around a property that needs to be cleared?
 - There will be a planning process around each property. **[See Anticipated Question #10]**
- The type of logging in the past – was there oversight or planning for those? It is awful what was done in Georgetown-Rowley. **[DCR acknowledges that some past logging was not reflective of the high standards the agency will adhere to in the future]**
- Why do you need to log out there in Georgetown-Rowley?
- Why are woodlands the largest amount of the designations?
 - Parklands and Reserves combined are larger than woodlands, and in those properties there will be no commercial harvesting.
- Why a 60/40 percent designation?
 - Previously more than 40 percent of lands were opened to commercial harvesting – there was a public process which led to the new guidelines we now have. Also, in woodlands there still will be recreational opportunities allowed – it's not solely for harvesting. **[See Anticipated Question #4]**
- Do you have it spelled out how Georgetown-Rowley is specifically mapped out, and how it will look? **[Please see maps of each property at <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/ld/printmap.pdf>]**
 - Georgetown-Rowley will not be limited in terms of the recreational opportunities.
- I'm concerned about the interruption of recreation when there is logging taking place. Specific concerns around the Bay Circuit Trail. **[See Anticipated Question #16]**
- I want the goal to be leaving the place better than it was.
- What is the difference between a patch, bubble, and zone 1? Within a park could you have a reserve, etc?
 - The designations can have preserved habitat within other areas – in the Resource Management Plan Process this is called “zone 1” which is similar to the term “patch reserve.” **[see Anticipated Question #8]**
- I abut Georgetown-Rowley on the Rowley side and have a stable. People for leisure go out with horses, etc. A housing development was added near our well, and it looks like a tornado came through – you can't pass through, no trees left, and it's flooded. Wouldn't it make sense to take each state forest and split 60/40 within each? Loggers come in and may

obey laws, but equipment coming in will impact the land, contaminate it. Looking at each property individually rather than overall state-wide is more desirable.

- If forestry in Georgetown-Rowley, will they take into account the existing trails and uses?
 - Existing trails have to be identified, examining sustainability, and keep those current trails. **[See Anticipated Question #16]**
- DCR should work with user groups, local organizations – e.g. Friends of Georgetown-Rowley have maps of trails.
- Will DCR be listening to town boards around specific concerns for species, wetlands?
 - Watershed, road access concerns are worked out with towns currently. Regarding species, if endangered, there are special concerns and practices that involve the DEP and Natural Heritage.
- What if a priority woodland area conflicts with an endangered species?
 - That would call for level 1 silviculture – which means that we would not harvest in that area.
- What would be the lifespan of areas to log, and how long before these areas will return?
 - **[As the majority of forest management under the new Guidelines will be partial harvests to maintain a variety of ages and species of trees, openings will be small and re-growth in the small openings with new young trees will occur a few years after harvests].**
- Will the State clean-up/fix areas that were a mess?
 - I hear dissatisfaction with the past cutting in Georgetown-Rowley **[DCR is responsible for making sure conditions are safe and following up on illegal activities such as illegal dumping].**
- I use Georgetown-Rowley daily year-round, as well as Harold Parker, Bradley Palmer, Willowdale, and the Blue Hills – these are important properties to me.
- Visionaries who created the Middlesex Fells had the idea of the poor taking transportation to experience nature. It is extraordinary that I can take the T, go to the Fells and experience many habitats, and then exit on the other side and take a bus back. There is great value to having an urban reserve.
- Is there an economic reason to be logging in this area (eastern MA)?
 - DCR doesn't make money on selling wood. Some economic benefit tends to go back into the property, some to the town(s).
- Who logs here?
 - The Home Fuelwood Program allows people to do some cutting for family heating fuel.
- Is Home Fuelwood Program just picking up scrap off the ground?
 - No, people are allowed to cut small trees, etc.
- How will DCR monitor commercial loggers? What is the process for hiring commercial loggers? Baxter State Park in Maine has scientific management zones with heavy

monitoring – how will DCR monitor harvesting? **[[Loggers are monitored by the DCR management forester overseeing the work. In turn, DCR’s service forestry staff approve and oversee the cutting plan for the property.]**

- Bald Hill – why was this saved when originally there was talk of logging it? **[Every property was evaluated as part of this process, and not all that have had past logging were designated as Woodlands]**

Group #3

Facilitator: Mette Kreuzmann

DCR Staff/Recorder: Bob O’Connor

- Questions around designation of Georgetown Rowley
- How did DCR decide on 60/40, how did they decide to have 75,000 acres parklands? **[DCR was guided by the Forest Futures Recommendations that included an acreage range for each of the three designations. In addition, the Patrick Administration committed to designate at least 60% parklands and reserves. See also Anticipated Question #5]**
- Does it make sense to log in woodlands in the region? **[One of the key goals for woodlands from the TSC report is as demonstration forests to show the public how managing forests is compatible with a variety of forest goals. Having some woodlands near more populated parts of the state is important if DCR is going to make the demonstration purpose of its forestry a priority. Overall, the majority of properties in the Boston area are designated as parklands].**
- Why no patch reserves? **[See Anticipated Question #8]**
- Middlesex Fells – Biomap should be reserves
- Process of meeting not good
- If designated a parkland, how will DCR protect wildlife? Zone 1 is narrower than patch reserve. RMP zone 1 is just R&E species. Need core Biomap 2 habitat. **[The recently-completed Resource Management Plan for the Blue Hills is a good model for balancing protection of sensitive rare species habitat and recreational activities. See <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/rmp/rmp-bluehills.htm>].**
- There will be consequences, unhappy, suspicious of these decisions.
- Georgetown-Rowley and Cleveland closely bounded by Route 95; putting forest in woodlands – thinning trees and noise. Any minimum for designation? – should be a minimum for woodland. **[Thinning of the forest is a tool to strengthen the buffer quality of the forest as it keeps vigorously growing and allows development of a more robust understory. A regularly thinned forest can be a more effective sound barrier. There is no minimum acreage for any of the three designations. Each property was evaluated individually and its characteristics considered.].**
- How will this affect me as an abutter to Georgetown-Rowley?
- I want images of how Georgetown-Rowley would look. **[Please see maps of each property at <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/ld/printmap.pdf>]**

- Woodlands are new rural economy – what is the urgency of woodlands near Boston? **[See answer to question above]**
- Give people in the east woodlands and DFW being cut. No reason to share woodlands. Questioning the balance in all regions.
- Need to get word out – many here for the first time tonight – work with libraries, town halls.
- Could be more activities, how to review the changes.
- Hunting allowed **[See Anticipated Question #11]**
- If activities currently allowed would change – e.g. to horseback riding **[See Anticipated Questions #3, 16]**
- How to decide on OHVs in reserves? **[See Anticipated Question #15]**
- Woodland – wood products. How to find vernal pools – logging. Do we certify vernal pools – how do we know where the vernal pools are? **[Under the new Management Guidelines for Woodlands, each proposed site for harvesting would receive a thorough natural resource review by trained staff as well as review by the public and a public site walk would occur prior to a harvest. Guidelines require best practices for Certified Vernal Pools and undocumented vernal pools to be reported to Natural Heritage. See <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/ld/mgmtguidelines.pdf>].**
- Are we going to mark every tree **even in 1 acre openings? [In most cases each tree to be harvested will be marked. In forests that are very homogeneous such as plantations, leave trees may be marked. In some openings boundaries of the opening will be marked and leave trees marked within the opening boundary].**
- Horse use – is it going to be protected? **[See Anticipated Questions #3, 16]**
- Reserves and OHVs – DCR committed to recreation for all uses including dirt biking – we all are tax payers. If designated woodland and never allow dirt biking. **[See Anticipated Question #15]**
- Patch reserves – for standard practices don't protect. [See Anticipated Question #8]
- Fells so many priority habitat and vernal pools. Zoning model doesn't look at R&E. Zoning provides context and should be integrated.
- Look at Biomap 2 – greater than rare and endangered cores? **[DCR used Biomap 2 for the Reserves model and uses Biomap 2 in general for information about species habitat on its properties]**
- How are you going to enforce designations – if you don't have staff? **[See Anticipated Question #18]**
- Specific properties – whole session should be on these.

Group #4

Facilitator: Richard Tillberg

DCR staff/Recorder: Bill Hill

- Concern with 2.5 mile buffer not being enough
- Maybe other measures should be used; say visitor usage e.g. numbers
- Safety in woodlands – keep brush off trails
- Trail buffer are very important where forestry takes place
- Very concerned about oversight on timber sales. **[Timber sales are overseen by a management forester and a service forester. Going forward, DCR will have more stringent guidelines for timber sales. See Woodlands management guidelines beginning on page 33, <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/ld/mgmtguidelines.pdf>]**
- Tours after timber sales too.
- More favor to Home Fuelwood as opposed to commercial woodlands.
- Concern with economics – does forestry pay? **[Revenue from a timber sale is not the sole reason to do logging. Forest management via harvesting is a tool for DCR to better manage the forest. DCR foresters do a wide variety of activities that do not involve managing timber sales. Some of those duties include forest inventories, boundary marking, encroachment monitoring, forest health surveys for insects, invasive species control, forest education and emergency response.]**
- Georgetown-Rowley – bad forest practice.
- Should have a pilot program for logging.
- East side of Harold Parker – heavy historic significance, has a recreation area – but currently designated woodlands.
- Georgetown-Rowley – should be a parkland but now designated woodland.
- Bald Plate should be parkland but is designated woodland.
- Willowdale – should be parkland but is reserve.
- Cleveland – should be changed from woodland to parkland.

Group #5

Facilitator/Recorder: Loraine DellaPorta

DCR Staff: Peter Church

- I am here to advocate for Georgetown Rowley and Parklands.
- There should be no cutting allowed there.
- We need to protect public drinking water supply.
- I am concerned about how the forest is left after cutting.
- It is good to leave some of it on the ground – nutrients.
- Do you have a plan to remove tree stumps?

- It will depend on the circumstances. Our goal is excellent and sustainable forestry.
- Not sure what that means – do not want to see things left a mess.
 - We will be guided by Chapter 132 and will follow best practices and protect sensitive resources.
- We've seen pictures from Forest Watch and sensitive water shed areas like Quabbin.
- What about filter strips/buffer strips? **[DCR will adhere to Wetlands Protection Act guidelines]**
- How are entrances chosen? **[This is based on location of where work is to take place and minimizing disturbance and conflict with user groups]**
- Do you consult with the abutters? **[We notify abutters of work that will take place]**
- With all of the budget cuts – how will you insure supervision?
 - Once the designations are finalized – there will be a plan in place to supervise.
- Five acres inappropriate in Georgetown Rowley plan – make a cut and 200 cords of wood.
- Do economics work on both? **[The economics of forest management are only one factor in the decision to manage woodlands]**
- Does not seem like home fuel wood is a good mix. People cut wood right along the trail and no one supervises the program.
 - We're looking balance needs of citizens and also have a goal of demonstrating good practices.
- In the FFVP management structure there were some serious errors, for example, Robinson State Forest – what assurances do we have that the management structure will be changed? **[There will be more internal review of work that will take place]**
- Why not just designate this park and reserve? It isn't necessary to cater to the lumber industry in this area. Why are we doing forestry here?
 - Forest management practices will be modified to allow for small openings of 1/3 acre or less.
- Is there income involved? If so, how much? **[This depends on the wood taken from an operation]**
- How much is the logger paid to log?
 - It depends on the individual contract.
- How much management will have to be done in that area? **[One of the primary goals of DCR is to have a healthy, uneven aged and diverse forest. The answer to the above question depends on how healthy the forest is]**
- We do not want our water supply messed up.
- Willowdale – why are we being picked on? This should be parkland.
- We're expecting 15-30% population growth – we need parkland.

- Cleveland – if you log it – you will ruin it. We'd hate to have it ruined.
- If it is logged – why go back?
- You create an incentive to create roads. DCR gives credit if they put roads in.
 - DCR can utilize in the future to do general maintenance. **[Within a logging contract there is an opportunity to improve the property by improving roads or adding fire gates where needed]**
- The U.S. Forest Services builds roads.
- Would like to see Willowdale designated as a reserve.
- What exactly is a reserve?
 - No commercial forestry or vegetation management.
- Trails are excessive. A few trails are important for habitat.
- People use this for mountain biking, horseback riding and also for education – like science projects.
- I am concern about balancing the multiple uses. Need to correct it.
- How old is the GIS data? **[This depends on what particular data set is being used but most data sets are fairly recent]**
- Not everyone who is a mountain biker goes tearing through – most users are responsible.
- There needs to be a mutual respect among different users.
- I like that there are multiple uses – just need to keep it in check.
- Some harvesting is important to manage forest health – such as downed woody debris.
- Flora and fauna live there – and there are salamander “condos”
- How do we get these designations changed?
 - DCR is holding these workshops so we can hear from everyone and make the right designations. It is important to us to hear your ideas and concerns.
- It sounds like DCR is hung up on 60/40 if you eliminate NE (?) then balance.
- If you took this area out – it would not impact the 60/40.
- Is this really about making money?
- (Response by another participant) Forestry is not just about making money. It is about buying local wood products and supporting the local wood industry instead of bringing wood in from other states or countries.
- There are no more local saw mills. Our wood is going to Maine and NH for biomass.
- You (DCR) should set up a program to keep wood local.
- I do not think nature should be destroyed – we need to fight for what we believe in.
- What about the property that people donated? DCR should honor the people who gave them land and not do things that run contrary to their wishes.

- The state (DCR) sends letters asking people to designate their land as forest land so that it can be used to practice good forestry.
 - Forest Management Plans are covered in Chapter 61.
- Is there more information online about Willowdale? **[On DCR's website is a list of most properties with additional information on each one]**
- You (DCR) need to understand there is a trust issue – we are skeptical about “excellent forestry” being a goal. That is not what has happened in the past.
- We've also seen heavy logging equipment and ORV use damage the lands.
- What can change as a result of this process?
 - Once we have completed these workshops, we will go back and review all of the feedback from the public and where possible, incorporate feedback into the final guidelines.
- I want to be clear that I am not anti-forestry. Uneven-aged management is important
- DFW land is approximately ¼ of the land in Essex County – 5 acres is plenty.
 - It is DCR's role to find a balance of uses while protecting the land.
- I do not see horseback riding listed as an allowable activity.
- Why are we having meetings in this type of format?
 - It allows for more discussion and interaction between DCR and the public. This format has worked well in the past and we've received good feedback about it.
- There are a lot of new people who have not participated in the past. It is good to see a new audience engaged.
 - We agree. It is nice to see this kind of a turnout.
- Would like to see DCR be clearer about what will happen with Georgetown Rowley. Please consider that. That's really why I came tonight.
- When will all of this be re-visited?
 - We are planning to revisit the plan in ten years.

Comments, Suggestions, and Questions Submitted

Danvers May 24, 2011

Comments:

- G.R.S.F. bio-diversity score fits profile of a woodland because it was harvested and it was an OHV site.

- Make Georgetown-Rowley, Cleaveland SF, and Harold Parker Recreation Focused PARKLAND.
- Agree with Boxford State Forest designation as reserve.
- Interest in horseback riding in Georgetown Rowley State Forest as a recreation as a professional woman and stable owner abutting.
- Instead of balancing state forest across the state – balance each property as an individual.
- Access for logging through residential neighborhoods.
- Logging/tree removal “creates” more wetlands. Machines leave oil, gasoline, hydraulic fuel, and land damage.
- Will upset wildlife etc. at least during and in the future.
- Landowners abutting state forest should be notified and involved in these studies as if a neighbor were making changes.
- A new well was just put in Rowley State Forest!!
- GR State Forest fought to eliminate legal use of motorized vehicles 2 yrs ago!! **[See Anticipated Question #18]**
- Great Process! Good Luck!
- I do not understand the reason for commercial timber harvesting. It seems to me to be solely to enrich the Commonwealth at the expense of the residents of the Commonwealth. I see no need for this as leave the forests alone. Thanks.
- I don't think the benefits to the state are adequate to justify the costs to the land. Scientific land management is ok. Commercial logging is NOT.
- Logical in consistency when 5 or 10 logging companies (my guess) can get logging contracts and weigh that against the intangible cost to citizens.
- Anything within 495 makes no sense to log. Out west (which I also use) makes much more sense to log.
- Why not allow only green logging in Georgetown? Oxen & axes.
- Concern over logging in Georgetown-Rowley Forest where we live close to I95 along the Kings Forest in Boxford. Will the reduced mass of trees increase road noise? **[Thinning of the forest is a tool to strengthen the buffer quality of the forest as it keeps the forest vigorously growing and allows development of a more robust understory. A regularly thinned forest can be a more effective sound barrier. Small properties were draft designated in all three categories with properties that are suited for parks being the best match of the three designations. In certain cases, small reserves and woodlands are also appropriate].**
- Concern is access to Georgetown Rowley Forest of logging vehicles from the weigh stations. Those roads connect to trails which bring you to our neighborhoods. Broadcasting access if entry way is visible.
- Effect of logging on watershed. All of Boxford is on well water. There is already a salt issue near the Mass Highway shed near exit 51. What effect will logging have on salt absorption from I95? **[The issue of road salt and drinking water is handled by best practices on**

road de-icing and stormwater infrastructure and is not related to forest harvests. In addition, the Forest Cutting Practices law with which DCR complies, there is language that provides for a non-cut buffer between roads and forest.]

- What will grow back in the logged area? Lots of poison ivy around and open space covered with poison ivy isn't very recreational. **[New trees will be regenerated in areas that are logged.]**

Suggestions:

- Rather than go "all in" on timber harvest, conduct one pilot program in one property that has been designated woodland.
- Forest Futures Visioning wanted 70-90,000 acres of parklands. Georgetown-Rowley and Harold Parker should be parklands.
- Bald Hill – Boxford State Forest within Boxford, Middleton and NA has a very special ecology due to very "basic" soil vs. acidic in rest of Essex County – Jim MacDougall and Russ Hopping – TTOR – both know a lot about this special ecology – Phillips Sanctuary (F&W) has special restrictions for protecting wildlife - however great need to maintain wood road from Middleton Road – for fire protection. Volunteers will maintain trails. Baldpate SF & CF SF – is very wet due to beavers – could be home fuel – not full scale logging. Bartell-Camel's Hump in Green Mountains, VT, Breadloaf-Sugarloaf: Middlebury mishandling gift of land to the people – who made % designation 60%-40%? **[See Anticipated Question #5]**
- This process addresses over 310,000 acres of land. As a trails motorcycle rider I do not have legal access to any of it. **[See Anticipated Question #15]**
- Everyone involved today has interest. Everyone has a right to a little of this land. Where can I go? Any woodland that could support skippers can support a 145lb trails motorcycle – by permit only. **[See Anticipated Question #15]**
- All landowners that abut Georgetown Rowley State Park should be aware and allowed to take part in this decision. Would like to see map of Georgetown Rowley Park – where are the logging areas – where near homes. Trucks for logging – how/who affects taxes for roads/noise? Is it for all woodlands? Any Parkland. What protects me as a property owner and home/land value in 10 years? Right now our land is dry where our house is – can you promise it will not change with logging? Found meeting less open than it should have been – limited open conversations. The people who use the land and pay taxes should have a say on use. **[[Please see maps of each property at <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/ld/printmap.pdf>]**
- The question of "balancing" all three types of properties in all regions makes zoning arbitrary. Need to protect properties in N.E. region – NO WOODLANDS.
- Make Question 3 (in small groups) the first since to some this is most important.
- Break into two types of groups: 1. those that are willing to follow the agenda 2. Those that want a public comment session and are disrupting the process.

Questions:

- Why is the Middlesex Fells not designated as a patch reserve? If not, why not? [**See Anticipated Question #8**]
- 90% were woodlands? Down to 40%? [**See Anticipated Question #5**]
- Did you take population centers into consideration? [**Demographic information was included in the Parklands model, and generally considered overall.**]
- What are the Governor's goals for this in the scope of employer losses? [**Not clear what is being asked**]
- How many loggers – as other people are employed statewide? [**There are approximately 600 licensed timber harvesters in Massachusetts**]
- Committee volunteer or paid? [**Not clear what is being asked**]
- 2.5 miles density? [**This is the population density within 2.5 miles of the property**]
- Who is managing (or overseeing) the “excellence” in forestry? [**DCR's new Director of Forest Stewardship will oversee forestry on the state parks system. Please also see Anticipated Question #18**]
- What is the fine filter criteria for limiting dirt bike riding? Criteria and process for adding new trails and dirt bike activity? [**Please see Motorized Trail Recreation Facility Assessment Policy available at http://www.mass.gov/dcr/recreate/ohv_policy.pdf**]

Information Requests:

- Did the DCR or someone actually go to every location and survey the land for habitat, birds, mammals, etc.? Did they survey or take notes of historical sites, former settlements, burial grounds, etc. **DCR and DFG have developed several mapping tools that look at the above resources and these were used in making designation decisions. The Guidelines for each of the three designations set best practices for all activities (recreation activities, forest harvesting, facilities development, etc.) to avoid impacts to these resources from activities that occur in each designation.**
- How do we find out who the stakeholder are that were involved in the Forest Futures Visioning Process? [**Please see information about the Technical Steering Committee and Advisory Group of Stakeholders at <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/news/publicmeetings/forestryfvp.htm>**]
- Why is the Georgetown Rowley State Forest 100% woodlands? [**DCR used the models developed to rate properties for the three designations and used these results along with staff knowledge to create a balance of the three designations across the state's ecosystems. The current public input process strives to gain additional information that will show ways to improve this balance]**
- Why do we need to have commercial logging in GRSF and any place in the state? The TSC report verified several important reasons for having a balance of managed and unmanaged forests. Managed forests provide demonstrations of careful harvesting to private landowners, provide different and necessary habitat for many wildlife species, provide locally produced wood products that support jobs and reduce our collective environmental

“footprint”, serve to raise the standards for logging across the states as well as several other benefits..

- How do you go about changing the designation after it has been decided, i.e. from **woodlands to reserve? [See Anticipated Questions #4, 7]**

**DCR Forest Futures Implementation Spring Meetings
Landscape Designation Process
Meeting #2
Wellesley, MA
May 25, 2011**

Small Group Notes

Note: These notes were prepared by the Massachusetts Office of Public Collaboration, who facilitated these meetings. Comments made by DCR staff at the meetings are indented. DCR added information shown in brackets after the meetings to address questions and provide context. All other comments were from public participants. **Note:** DCR responses are indented – all other comments/questions were from members of the general public.

Facilitators: Bill Logue and Loraine Della Porta

Recorder: Courtney Breese

EEA/DCR staff: Stephanie Cooper, Peter Church, David Goodwin, Mike Fleming, Chandreyee Lahiri, Bill Hill

- Can people look at layers for some specific properties? **[Additional maps are available at <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/ld/landscapedesignations.htm>]**
- It seems like some properties were more all-or-nothing – was that done? **[Many properties were given a single designation. In some instances, intensive recreational areas were “carved out” as parklands within properties designated woodlands or reserves. See Anticipated Questions #2, 6]**
- How fine of a filter was applied in making these designations?
 - DCR made models for all designations and then determined what was most appropriate for a property. Intensive use areas were marked as parkland no matter what designation was around them. Regarding high-density trails, trail systems are harder to designate. Recreational access to trails is allowed in all designations. Regarding parklands, DCR looked at density of trails, use, and population. Example presented is Dubuque – very large, and very remote. **[See Anticipated Question #2]**
- If looking at urban parklands, there is potential for evermore intensive development and maybe more need for preservation.
- Zone designations are not the same as landscape designations? E.g. Blue Hills?
 - Blue Hills is a parkland, but it has been zoned for certain areas to be protected, etc through the Resource Management Plan for the property.
- Resource Management Plans – are they like the Charles Master Plan?
 - Charles is more complex because of the specificity for the site [Please see <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/pe/Upper%20Charles.pdf>]. RMPs look at all factors, work with all partners, and give an idea of where to go next, which may include more specific planning, such as for trails.

- Which (RMP or Master Plan) is more in the implementing level?
 - In general, master plans are completed to guide capital investment (eg building a new visitor center). The Charles Master Plan was completed some while ago, and RMP is a newer approach. In the sense of prescription, RMP is less prescriptive than Master Plan.
- Interest in learning more of the prescription of properties within each designation. What designation actually means for the use, development of each site. **[Please see final draft management guidelines <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/ld/mgmtguidelines.pdf>]**
- RMPs required by law. Some properties have not had an RMP yet. Regarding designations, for woodlands, will there be provision that they should not cut before the RMP is completed? **[See Anticipated Question #9]**
- Some areas e.g. Charles is a different animal than properties shown in the presentation.
- Cambridge Esplanade plan exists for cutting canopy and restoring plan of 100 years ago. Not sure where this stands now or if it fits into newer designation. **[It is designated parkland as part of the Esplanade]**
- What if a property fits into 2 categories – during the RMP process, could the designation change?
 - No, but during this process you should raise those concerns. DCR cannot adjust the allocations recommended by the Forest Futures process, but have tried to balance within each ecosystem.
- We need more clarity at these meetings about what you are wanting to hear.
- Can we get property-specific maps?
- We are working on that – they are forthcoming. **[Additional maps are available at <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/ld/landscapedesignations.htm>]**
- How is it possible to make our best case? We need data on the sites so we can make our argument. **[See additional details available at <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/ld/landscapedesignations.htm>]**
- TNC model used Biomap. But this recently changed.
 - Biomap 2 came out in the fall – so that is what DCR used.
- Skating rinks, pools, zoo – if taken out of the equation these lower parkland numbers. Certain properties I can't imagine including in this process.
- If a facility was equally rated woodland and parkland – are you going to make a decision based on the 60/40 split?
 - Not solely about this, but keeping in mind the overall allocation. DCR did not look at acreage while taking the first pass at designations for each property, and came surprisingly close to the 60/40.
- Mixed use – I was blindsided by the designation of woodland for Upton State Forest. There are certain areas of intense use and biology – looking for a split designation. Hopkinton could also have a split use. Riverbend as well, and many others could be looked at this way.

I feel that instead of looking at acres to acres, could look at each – some areas could be designated more specifically.

- Would you consider category within parklands, “urban wilds” to specific sites such as the Charles? Urban parklands have successive species and species endangered because of encroaching people and use. Concerned that if the category does not appear in this document, it will be a very uphill battle to get it.
 - Zone 1 is meant to allow for this level of protection. Stonybrook Reservation is an example of a property that has urban wilds characteristics and through the Resource Management Plan, a Zone 1 area was defined where resources require a higher level of protection.
- Understanding because desire for eastern reserves, changed acreage requirement. But there may be a need to designate an urban reserve or urban wild to manage for species.
- If going after invasive species, this will destroy urban wild because it has been neglected. On the Charles – tidying up has drive out species. Making the banks more like corporate parks, will remove species and the experience the wild urban parks were intended for.
- Look at urban vs. pristine forests, substantial differences, but they may fall in same category. Mitigation of species e.g. bear towards more urban areas, slower movement because of prevalence of people. Areas like the Charles can't fit into a category that I see.
- Lands some municipalities use and DCR uses similarly.
- Useful to categorize within each, weighing categories, etc. implication of funding applied to each.
- What is the amount of snow pack required in reserves for snowmobile access? **[Four inches]**
- Back and forth discussion of Upton – I believe in need for mixed use, but see increasing population and use. Friends Group recognizes need to accommodate all users.
 - Before cutting begins in woodlands, a thorough process will be undertaken.
- Upton Friends will give you inventory, inform you of cultural, landscape, etc. Upton was surrounded by Native American communities – it was used as a ceremonial place. So before you cut – if this is not taken into consideration, these sites may get wiped out. The CCC Camp area – best example surviving in the state. In plans for CCC – developed for recreation – there is concentration of trails. Area has intense risk for forest fires – managed for that. Area designated for wildlife preserve – assumed active management. F&W – Active management. Out of state license plates are increasing at Upton. Upton is within 60 days of signing Sweet William Farm – 60 acres owned with trails connecting to State Forest and connection to another farm in Grafton. Very close to connecting with Whitehall.
- If we could see the map for Upton, could we have a conversation around this?
 - Yes. [map provided].
- Different definition of intensive use – for DCR it is properties (buildings), but to us it is heavily used trails.
- I don't like the phrasing of the (keypad) questions “overall designation statewide.”

Comments, Suggestions, and Questions Submitted

Wellesley May 25, 2011

Comments:

- I cannot stay for the entire meeting and I came primarily to understand your model and process. I want to let you know I'm extremely impressed at both – congratulations.

**DCR Forest Futures Implementation Spring Meetings
Landscape Designation Process
Meeting #3
Pittsfield, MA
May 26, 2011**

Small Group Notes

Note: These notes were prepared by the Massachusetts Office of Public Collaboration, who facilitated these meetings. Comments made by DCR staff at the meetings are indented. DCR added information shown in brackets after the meetings to address questions and provide context. All other comments were from public participants.

Group #1

Facilitator: Loraine Della Porta

Recorder: Courtney Breese

DCR: Gary Briere, Peter Church

- The maps are very difficult to read at this size. Will they be blown up by area and available by region?
 - We (DCR) will work on getting that done – watch the website. **[Additional maps are available at <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/ld/landscapedesignations.htm>]**
 -
- From looking at the map it looks like we did not get very much designated as parkland in western MA. Looks like we got mostly woodlands and reserves. We are heavy trail users – hikers, mountain bikers, etc.
 - The recreational uses will not change. If you were able to hike or mountain bike in an area – you will still be able to do so.
- Will there be development of new trails in all designations?
 - DCR will be more conservative in some areas e.g. reserves, and will follow management guidelines. **[See Anticipated Question #16]**
- When will you kick this off?
 - In the fall.
- I see some issues with clear cutting.
- How will you protect existing trails from logging?
 - There will be clear guidelines that will protect existing trails and where there is logging, there will be close coordination to insure trails are not damaged.
- It would be nice to see in writing how you will be protecting trails, specifics. **[See Final Draft Management Guidelines, Appendix 4. Silvicultural Levels and Guidelines <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/ld/mgmtguidelines.pdf>].**

- Poll taken today – 90% was trail users. I see more than that here. Today I saw ATV, bikes, hikers. But we don't have parkland here.
 - Designations will not limit recreation already taking place on DCR properties.
- It seems the lobby for wood products and reserves are all that's being represented here in the Berkshires.
 - If designated a woodland, this does not mean DCR will limit recreation use and that it will allow cutting on the entire property.
- In the last 100 years, the state has not logged more than ½ of one percent of its forested land in one year – will that change?
 - It does not seem likely that will change. **[See Anticipated Question #10]**
- MA Forest Watch is reporting something very different. They are claiming that cutting will increase like 400 or 4000%.
 - Don't believe everything you read on that site. Some of the cuts shown were done 5 years ago and if you visit the site now the trees are 10 feet high. [In addition, going forward, DCR will be taking a different direction, focusing on uneven aged management, with smaller openings and more attention to aesthetics. See Anticipated Question #10 <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/ld/ho2-Anticipated%20Questions.pdf>]
- Isn't there some need for even-age cutting? It's aesthetically awful, but a couple years later it looks very different.
 - When you have been walking somewhere for years, when there this type of a cut it will look very different. [see above note]
 - Is logging really that profitable? **[Revenue from a timber sale is not the sole reason to do logging. Forest management via harvesting is a tool for DCR to better manage the forest. DCR foresters do a wide variety of activities that do not involve managing timber sales. Some of those duties include forest inventories, boundary marking, encroachment monitoring, forest health surveys for insects, invasive species control, forest education and emergency response].**
- Not really. That is not why the state does it. The DCR does not get that money – it goes back to the General Fund – isn't that right?
 - Yes, that is correct. There are several reasons why we (DCR) would actively manage our land, for example, we need to manage invasive species. We also manage for water supply protection and to protect the habitat of certain species.
- I heard that the State loses money on foresting – where does the money go?
 - The money goes to the State General Fund – not directly to the agency.
- Pittsfield State Forest – I am upset that it is all woodland. Parkland just around Berry Road. Previous areas going to be protected – non-motorized. Brick House Mountain Road and North is important to mountain bikers.
- It seems we are getting shafted with no parkland in the Berkshires.
 - DCR will not be limiting recreation in other designations.

- I thought most of our wood goes to Canada.
 - That's true, but only 2 percent of our products are from here too.
- We really do not have any place to take the wood. Unlike other states, we are not supporting large biomass operations. Do keep in mind that we are all wood users here. We should be supplying ourselves and not relying on other states or countries for our wood supply.
- When you cut the trees, will you take the whole tree out or leave some behind. It looks like such a mess.
- I understand that downed woody material in the forest is important for wildlife habitat. It is important for nesting and provides nutrients.
- I understand that some of the tree should stay, but most of it should go so it doesn't leave a mess.
- Do you consider logging conservation?
 - Yes. **[Harvesting when planned and carried out properly is an important part of a balanced approach to conservation].**
- Hopefully the State will be here watching over any cutting on its property.
- We should be supporting our local wood industry and let local people make a living.
- I use motorized vehicles on State properties – used to drive trails until they were shut down. I thought parks would be designated and trails will be for all until fine filtering is done.
 - In 2006 DCR worked with groups to develop criteria for determining suitability of properties for motorized use. Approved by the Stewardship Council in 2007. **[Please see Motorized Trail Recreation Facility Assessment Policy available at http://www.mass.gov/dcr/recreate/ohv_policy.pdf].** Resource Management Plan in Pittsfield – part of the process will be the fine filter criteria. As DCR makes designations for the 8 properties with motorized use, will use this fine filter to make determinations. **[See Anticipated Question #15]**
- I don't know, it feels like ATVs won't be able to go anywhere eventually – maybe consider going out in remote areas where we're not bothering anyone.
 - A number of criteria including percent grade, slopes, etc. **[See Anticipated Question #15]**
- What will you do regarding policing of areas?
 - Chapter 202, 2010 legislation with penalties for illegal use and a fund for creating/maintaining trails and education programs. **[See Anticipated Questions #15, 18]**
- I see a lot of forests, the percentage for OHV is tiny – I don't feel DCR should be prejudiced against this group.
- Pittsfield State Forest – hiking Taconic Crest Trail – looks like it should be a part of the parklands. Campgrounds at the top and bottom of State Forest that should be parkland. If you can't tell us today exactly what properties are in the "pink" area – I am concerned that they won't be incorporated into the modeling. As was stated, it looks like western MA got all of the brown (woodlands) and eastern MA got all of the parklands. It should not be that way.

- Some of these designations are based on historical use. Through the RMP process for Pittsfield, zones will be established for areas with sensitive resources, which will include protection from commercial logging. There will be a robust public process and DCR will be looking for public input on this [See <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/rmp/rmp-pittsfield.htm>]
- I have logged on 20 properties in State land. DCR foresters 15-20 years ago had a 50-200 foot limitation around trails – couldn't cut near them, had to remove any drops, forest manager overviewed, and you couldn't get a deposit back if you left things behind or did something you shouldn't. That had been lost in the last 5-10 years and it should be put back in so this doesn't get dropped again.
 - Timber contracts include in-kind services to improve the park (e.g. trails). [See **Final Draft Management Guidelines, Appendix 4. Silvicultural Levels and Guidelines** <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/ld/mgmtguidelines.pdf>].
- Is the Pittsfield RMP almost done? What about ATV use?
 - Yes, but planning will continue state-wide for all DCR properties. Pittsfield was high on the list. In 2007 an Off-Highway-Vehicle working group set some criteria for determining where OHV use was appropriate. We recognize there are a lot of users in Pittsfield and we will be continuing to look at each of our properties and to make decisions using the criteria set forth. [Please see **Motorized Trail Recreation Facility Assessment Policy** available at http://www.mass.gov/dcr/recreate/ohv_policy.pdf and **Pittsfield Resource Management Plan** <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/rmp/rmp-pittsfield.htm>].
- There are only eight places I can ride (off highway vehicles).
- What about October Mountain?
 - Part of it is designated as a reserve [and part is designated a woodland].
- Asheville, North Carolina – Bent Creek Experimental Forest. There is a benefit of doing things like they did here – skidding logs on cables versus cut downhill. This was not just done straight up and down, near perimeter road.
 - We are always interested in learning new and better ways. We will look into that.
- Most Massachusetts properties don't want permanent roads built. Maybe need roads cut for woodlands to make use easier/better.
- In making these designations – did you consult with neighbors/abutters?
 - Yes to some extent. We also held a round of public meetings state-wide to gather public input about the criteria we should use in making these designations.
- If built roads that are sustainable, that might make a place for off highway vehicle use. Use loggers to create sustainable OHV roads. Maybe that could work here. Current OHV trails are not sustainable.
- If you were to adopt that, maybe it could alleviate the problem of high concentration (of OHV) because they have nowhere else to ride?
- Do wood contracts go to the highest bidder? [**Bids go to the highest qualified bidder but DCR reserves the right to reject bids from unqualified bidders. The new Management**

Guidelines for Woodlands will phase in the requirement for qualified bidders to have logger certification demonstrating that they do high quality work. DCR also limits the type of equipment for harvests so it matches the sensitive nature of harvest sites. DCR also requires winter or frozen ground conditions for certain sites and other limitations that protect the site.]

- The wood industry is looking for the State to look not just at highest bidder but also at those with a good track record. **[DCR plans to strengthen its contracts to ensure we have the best loggers on board – see answer to previous question.]**
- Trails including Three Mile Hill are designated woodland. But trail last year – collaboration of AMC, ATC, Berkshire Trails – surprised to see it as a woodland. Taconic was considering a trail. I work for the Land Trust – we were hoping to designate our own reserve next to an anticipated reserve (Jug End) – but now it is not a reserve. How much talking with neighbors took place in this process?
 - Jug End is a special property in that DCR co-owns it with the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife. Some of this property has open land that the state maintains for early successional habitat and that section did not seem appropriate for reserve designation. **[The rest of this property has been a reserve for a number of years and is proposed as one under this process.]**
- How does designation affect future acquisitions? DCR carefully evaluates potential new acquisitions based on a number of factors and maximizes the value to the state conservation efforts with the funding it has available. The value for a potential acquisition to add to statewide conservation goals is the most important consideration. Protecting priority land from development is the first objective with acquisitions. How the land will be designated and managed occurs after the acquisition occurs based on an analysis of the property, its resources and potential and its surroundings.
- Why is it that Fish & Wildlife land is not included in this process?
 - Although F&W is a “sister” agency, they have a different mission and manage their lands for different purpose.
- Will this “fine zoning” process be done within all 3 designations?
 - Yes. There are 85 planning units and some combine multiple DCR properties. For example, the RMP for Pittsfield includes Middlefield and Becket. There will be an RMP for all DCR properties. **[See Pittsfield Resource Management Plan <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/rmp/rmp-pittsfield.htm>].**
- Brickhouse to Churchill in Pittsfield State Forest should be designated as a parkland.
- Bugs – 3 devastating kinds: Asian Longhorned Beetle, Ash Borer, and Woolly Adelgid. Biggest concern of wood industry – not too many that know what to look for, and if forests are not actively managed, we won’t know if they come in. If we need to get rid of bugs, you will see these cuts, but it will get rid of the problem. Others that are out there need to know what they’re looking for.
- Who will be on the forest committee you mentioned? Will you have trail experts and bug people?
 - Yes, we hope to have a number of experts with diverse backgrounds and areas of expertise. DCR will establish a Forest Reserve Scientific Advisory Committee to

advise the agency on vegetation management activities and assist with long term scientific monitoring and research opportunities in Reserves].

- Will these people be state employees?
 - No, not necessarily. We are looking to create a committee of outside experts who can advise DCR.
- Shouldn't the committee that will be advising be knowledgeable, looking for them?
 - Yes, we do want people with specific background and expertise.
- Do you anticipate having these experts on site and in other areas?

Group #2

Facilitator: Richard Tillberg

Recorder: Mette Kreutzmann

DCR/EEA staff: Bob O'Connor and Paul Lyons

- How involved was National Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) in designations? Concerned about woodlands and rare and endangered species occurrences
 - Much came from the Natural Heritage Program and Biomap2. Reserve model based on Biomap2.
- Does NHESP need to approve designations?
 - No, they don't need to approve the designations.
- What is the relationship between designations and rare species?
 - Natural Heritage reviews plans regarding rare species and gives input. They have a top ten list of rare species encountered most here and how to protect them. DCR staff also give input regarding how to protect and manage. If you are aware of specific properties that have rare species, let us know. The management guidelines from May 2011 that we brought tonight, and which I encourage you to take a copy of and read through, include lots of changes from the previous draft; most of those changes were based on public comments last fall.
- In Woodlands, will there be a public comment period before harvest?
 - No, but we will get public knowledge through walk-about; we will post them ahead of time. Information from Natural Heritage is available on GIS – we used it in modeling and it's also used when planning management operations. There is a close working relationship between Natural Heritage and DCR. If a property is designated as woodlands and it is similar to the Blue Hills – area Zone 1 sensitive – any activity will be scrutinized. **[True – on sensitive resource areas in woodlands very limited activity will occur (please see “level 1” description for Woodlands in the Final Draft Management Guidelines - see <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/ld/mgmtguidelines.pdf>].** Eventually, we will have Management plans on the 85 properties with the same level of detail as seen in Blue Hills.

- Will forestry activities (harvesting) have to wait till the Management Plans have been done? **[No – but harvests will be limited to thinning and uneven aged management with small openings - for details please see Anticipated Question #9 <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/ld/ho2-Anticipated%20Questions.pdf>]**
 - Level 1 management – sensitive areas; Level 2 – uneven management; Level 3 – larger openings up to 5 acres. We will mostly stick to level 2 or 1.
- Where logging is permitted – will there be limits on logging? A buffer zone is needed around logging. Serves as a buffer/sound barrier.
- Forestry practices going forward will change – better practices and higher standards. State lands are important; we want to demonstrate best practices. **[See Final Draft Management Guidelines, Appendix 4. Silvicultural Levels and Guidelines <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/ld/mgmtguidelines.pdf>].**
- Leave lower row of trees as buffer.
 - The new guidelines call for smaller patch cuts.
- There are 112,000 acres of reserves which cannot be touched. Most of the reserves are in the Berkshires. There is no regeneration in reserves. There are no sun rays hitting the forest ground. In woodlands, one can go in and create some habitat where new trees go in.
 - **[While many large, unfragmented properties that rated highly for reserves are in the Berkshires, there are also extensive areas designated woodlands. While openings and forest regeneration occur more regularly in woodlands, eventually openings will occur in reserves (the recent tornado in central MA is a good example of the creation of early successional habitat via infrequent disturbances)]**
- Berkshires got hammered with reserves; too many reserves. Sportsmen want food for the wildlife. In October Mountain ten years ago, no animals and no sun on the forest ground. The forest was too thick and too dark. Please open up.
 - Different wildlife benefit from different levels of openings – there are also natural disturbances – storms, ice storms, fires take place and naturally thin out areas. Game species often do better in young forests, but other species thrive in older, more mature forests. The Berkshires designations are in part a reflection on where the big properties are. The Berkshires are also diverse; different land forms and ecosystems and ELUs. The best suited properties for reserves are in the Berkshires. It is tough to spread out reserves throughout the state, though we tried to do so. We encourage you to weigh in if you know where woodland would be better – but be specific on location. It was the Biomap2 that advised us on reserves.
- Will it still be the practice to solicit bids for harvesting? It is expensive to put in a bid, especially taking into consideration vernal pools and rare species' areas.
 - Yes, though there will be higher standards for contracts. It is cost effective if logging enough timber. It is normal to work around vernal pools, rare species' areas. It will increase the value of forests long-term. It improves the forests when there is selective logging/cutting. In 30 years, the value will have increased.
- The Fish & Wildlife – how do they fit in? Were they part of this process? Does this process eliminate their management?

- DCR and F&W have different jurisdictions and different properties.. F&W still conducts management on their own properties; they report to a different entity than DCR. But there is good communication between F&W and DCR regarding reviewing guidelines.
- I know there is a 60-day comment period, but it will take time to learn the details of the designations. It would be very useful if we could see more details and learn the extent of analysis for each property and its designation. In order to take advantage of the comment period and potentially provide a compelling argument for change, we need access to details to review the current plans.
 - We are probably moving towards releasing all maps and information. It takes time for the GIS staff to do this and make available. The FFVP gave guidance regarding the criteria; then we took that to the public. Some properties were easy to designate in the models, whereas other properties showed more than one option for designation. We received input from experts, people, on the ground and local knowledge. This is not based on just a computer model saying how to designate. **[Please see additional details at <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/ld/landscapedesignations.htm>]**
- Make the information available. This is the home stretch. Having the added transparency is good. I have high respect for DCR and this process, but we bring a different perspective.
 - Yes, this is the home stretch. We want to assemble all the data and all the people's input and their feelings – the human value aspect must be incorporated. We want your gut reactions.
- We need to see the details to give input regarding particular properties. There are not enough details on the maps we are looking at tonight. I can't see “my” trails.
 - It is possible to zoom in on the PDF maps, but it will not give you latitude and longitude. [Please see additional details at <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/ld/landscapedesignations.htm>]
- Is it possible to show trails and landmarks? Water bodies, trails, roads, and such
- Yes, we can provide those details. It'll take some time to provide the maps. [Please see additional details at <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/ld/landscapedesignations.htm>] There are fewer trails available for OHV use in the Berkshires.
 - We did not eliminate any existing vehicle use on existing trails. New trails are a different matter. In reserves, it is difficult to build new trails. A fine-filter analysis of trails is going to be done. I recommend that you read through the May 2011 Draft Criteria and Guidelines on trails and then give us specific comments. **[See Anticipated Question #15]**
- Reserves and ATV use – take Savoy – they banned ATVs for ecological reasons; now woodlands. On newly-created woodland areas, are they open to OHV use? **[See Anticipated Question #15]**
- Are DCR Management Foresters going to work on forestry in the Berkshires?
 - Yes, and they perform other duties – for example, there are still boundaries to be marked.
- Why are there no reserves in the Blue Hills considering it is a 7000 acres area?
 - As Peter Church mentioned in his presentation, the Blue Hills have different zones of

protection even if it is all designated as parklands.

- The 60/40 ratio seems arbitrary if one goes by science and ecology – perhaps better if tossed?
 - The 60/40 ratio came from the EEA Secretary and was adopted by the Administration. **[See Anticipated Question #5]**
- But the EEA Secretary is no longer there, so ...
 - The ratio has been adopted. We are not going to revisit that. We have spent one year plus with this ratio in place. We looked at ecological maps; we looked at each ELU, and reserves in each were recommended. In Eastern Mass, there is more recreation, so it is harder to do reserves. The percentages are pretty good as they are.
- On the ground implementation – how is that going to work. Is there enough staff to implement?
 - Not much staff is allocated to reserves [currently]. Monitoring and research are needed. We need help from the public especially with being our eyes and ears regarding invasive species. DCR lost a lot of staff in recent years. **[See Anticipated Question #18]**
 - I recommend that you take a look at the handout called Changes **[See Key Changes in Management Guidelines <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/ld/ho3-key%20management%20guideline%20changes.pdf>]**. It gives a great overview. We want to stay close to the **[at least]** 60/40 ratio, so if something changes here, then there must be a change also somewhere else to keep this balance.
- Trails density is a criteria – DCR used own people to map the trails. I'm concerned about their accuracy.
 - We used GPS which has a 2 meter accuracy and many of our staff walked the trails extensively.

Group #3

Facilitator/Recorder: Bill Logue

EEA/DCR staff: Stephanie Cooper, Bill Hill, Mike Fleming

- How much woodlands will be available for active management?
 - Not yet known, best estimate is that 25% will be unavailable due to slopes, wetlands, vernal pools, riparian issues
- If so much of the land is private and available for harvesting why have demonstration activities in these sensitive areas? Will there be plans to avoid wetlands and have buffers?
 - There will be different levels of management activities, which try to reflect the Technical Steering Committee Recommendations with three levels, one of which is no or minimal harvesting within a woodland and there is a decision process. Examples might include not harvesting near trails.
- In the guidelines are 25 acres clear cuts allowed? Uneven aged management?

- Where possible uneven age management will occur as the primary emphasis, generally with opening of 1/3 of an acre or less. Under some circumstances cuts could be as large as 5 acres. [25-acre clear cuts will not be allowed].
- Will there be patch reserves? If so when, how will there be determined and who will decide?
 - Areas will be protected at this finer scale through Resource Management Plans. **[See Anticipated Question #8]**
- The criteria in the guidelines need the context of the surrounding regions, for example Pittsfield State Forest is a recreation resource for the city. The woodlands designation might inhibit the development of infrastructure needed. Were the local community needs taken into account?
 - All communities (municipalities) were surveyed in the summer of 2010. A place may be designated as woodlands but there will still be trails systems.
- The Pittsfield State Forest Designation as woodlands should be recreation. Trails can be rebuilt, it should be recreation friendly, the recreation “bubble” is too small, harvesting will change the character of the experience, the economy of the local towns is dependent on tourism. Volunteers can help maintain the trails.
- Did the landscape designation process result in choices to arrive at the allocations?
 - Some choices had to be made but these were done after modeling each property and asking local property managers.
 - Revenue from harvesting is put back into properties and is a key part of the work on public lands to maintain roads, trails and drainage.
- October Mountain State Forest is designated as a woodland. When will the Management Plan be done?
 - Overall, DCR properties need a total of 85 Resource Management Plans. Six are being worked on now. October Mountain is in the central Berkshire area.
 - Also, there are 4 Forest Resource management Plans for the Berkshires (western) which have been approved prior to the Forest Future Visioning Process. These will be updated, revised and edited based on the Landscape Designations. DCR will start with small projects, engage the public before anything happens, walks will be conducted showing how work will be done, its purpose and perhaps walks in places to show what it will look like over time.
- Why did DCR do big cuts in the past?
 - The plantations of Norway Spruce with mortality and some regeneration growing so the work was technically an “over story removal” which are not restricted in size - although people did not view it that way. There was an attempt to recoup some value. There was also a focus on early successional habitat.
- With long-term management, uneven/even aged management is the history looked at, for example a catastrophic even that starts a process?
 - When decisions are made, we look at local wood production, demonstration capacity, diversity of trees and animals, etc. The goal is to do forestry at a high level, show how it is done and transfer this skill to private lands. The best scenario is when this is informed by people’s values.

- The approximate edge of the October Mountain Reserve is good in creating the reserve but the reserve should be larger. The Visioning process said 15,000 acre reserves. October Mountain and Savoy and Dubuque are also this size. The towns are dependent on tourism. The revenue from wood products does not bring much money in. The Appalachian Trail corridor needs to be protected.
- The Appalachian Trail Memorandum of Understanding, and similar types of agreements are now addressed in the guidelines. **[See Anticipated Question #16 and Final Draft Management Guidelines, Appendix 4. Silvicultural Levels and Guidelines <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/ld/mgmtguidelines.pdf>].**
- What is the process for zoning within the designations?
 - Resource Management Plans for each property or property unit (group of properties) need to be done. The forest Resource Management Plans are done but each property needs to be looked at holistically and the two integrated. Pittsfield is being prepared. The Guidelines section 1.5 addresses the planning process. **[See Final Draft Management Guidelines <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/ld/mgmtguidelines.pdf>]**
 - Both Beartown and October Mountain ranked high for both reserves and woodlands.
- The Massachusetts Wood Producers would be willing to help maintain trails through work in kind.
- Harvesting equipment creates and maintains trails that are wider than what most people are looking for.
- For the balance in allocations and given the intensity of people's use, there should be more woodlands in the eastern part of the state.
- Will there be investment or funding to maintain trails and parks?
 - The process will result in lands being managed differently; some existing uses will be examined (for example, page 3 in the guidelines mentions off-highway vehicle use will be maintained in most cases in reserves but it will be examined **[DCR will maintain trails and parks as feasible with the funding levels provided to the agency.]**
- Have the models looked at implementation and resource requirements?
 - The agency's budget is not ideal, the hope is the process will help use resources more efficiently and call on partners for things such as scientific monitoring of reserves. **[See Anticipated Question #18]**
- Are management practices looking at the needs of particular species, for example blackcherry needs large openings?
 - Yes

Comments, Suggestions, and Questions Submitted

Pittsfield May 26, 2011

Suggestions:

- Foresters should be allowed to actually manage the woodlands. Are there going to be new scientist positions in reserves or are you going to transfer Management Foresters into Reserves? How will projects like Robinson State Park be handled; will dead red pine, no commercial logging, will you use tax money to clean up damage. **[Given existing budget constraints, DCR does not anticipate hiring new positions in the near future so existing foresters will need to balance their time among all the designations with boundary work, continuous forest inventory, etc. work needed on all designations. DCR hopes that non-profit conservation organizations will help with monitoring projects on reserves.]**
- Within woodlands, plan logging access roads and trails so as to be later used as sustainable ORV trails, snowmobile trails, mountain bike, hiking, etc.
- There is a misconception that woodlands will be just thrown over to logging which is not true!
- Have more similar meetings before fall of 2011. It doesn't sound like they're planned. Advertise meetings better.

Comments:

- I was disappointed to get to the public comment meeting and not have actual blown-up copies of each of the properties (in RMP areas) with designations and zones (if developed) in them. The DCR should have been better prepared to discuss and get comment on the specific properties that are important to us, not just say to access them on the internet site.

Information Request:

- Newly created woodland areas – can they be reconsidered for (e.g.) OHV use (even if it was prohibited via an earlier analysis)? **[See Anticipated Question #15]**

Special Needs Request:

- If logging is to occur in winter, the logger's contract should require him/her to maintain snowmobile trail access, i.e. leave an unplowed strip on the side of a logging woods trail. This works well in Vermont. Better yet don't log from 12/15 through 3/30.

**DCR Forest Futures Implementation Spring Meetings
Landscape Designation Process
Meeting #4
South Deerfield, MA
June 2, 2011**

Small Group Notes

Note: These notes were prepared by the Massachusetts Office of Public Collaboration, who facilitated these meetings. Comments made by DCR staff at the meetings are indented. DCR added information shown in brackets after the meetings to address questions and provide context. All other comments were from public participants.

Group #1

Facilitator/Recorder: Bill Logue

DCR staff: Paul Lyons, Amanda Lewis, Dave Goodwin, Gary Briere and Bill Hill

- What data layers were used in GIS?
 - Woodlands model based on 12 criteria from the Technical Steering Committee (TSC) recommendations, data from MassGIS. Parklands were DCR intensive use data, census data and trail density. Reserves relied on BioMap 2. [Please see GIS Modeling Process <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/ld/gismodel/gismodelprocess.pdf>].
- Did road density push sites to woodlands or reserves?
 - Higher road density was an indicator for woodlands potential. Lower density for reserves potential. However, not all urban parks were analyzed for reserves.
- How was the 60/40 split achieved?
 - Acreage ranges were recommended by the TSC and the split committed to by the Patrick Administration [commitment was to designate “at least 60 percent” as parklands and reserves.]. Each location was analyzed on its own then they were aggregated and the allocation was relatively close.
- What is the breakdown in the Berkshires with respect to allocations?
 - They were arrived at statewide with ecological land unit underlying information. DCR will see if the breakdown on allocation for those areas can be determined to see how it fits with the statewide designation allocations. **[Note: this breakdown was later provided to the commenter.]**
- The Greenfield area people see it as closer to 50/50 and would like to see more reserves in the eastern part of the state and more parklands in the western portion.
 - There will be recreational activities in all designations. For OHVs the fine filter will be applied to determine if trails need to be relocated. Generally, in places where OHV use is permitted it will continue. The biggest difference is commercial logging, which will only happen in woodlands.

- There seems to be a mixed message about opening size for harvests, will 25 acre clear cuts be allowed?
 - With even aged management where there is seedling regeneration it would be possible to do an overstory removal that would look like a large opening to the public and which would be permissible under Massachusetts Law. However the guidelines restrict these to 5 acres, under special circumstances [25-acre clearcuts will not be allowed]). These larger openings could occur only with commissioner approval and the advice of DFW and additional public process. The guidelines provide more information [**See Final Draft Management Guidelines, Appendix 4. Silvicultural Levels and Guidelines** <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/ld/mgmtguidelines.pdf>]. With cutting, there will be public involvement at the start, with site visits before the harvest to explain why a cut is happening, what will happen, what it will look like and, if possible, walks in places which have been harvested previously to show how it will look after a period of time.
- What will be the impacts on OHV use?
 - There are 8 DCR properties where it is legal to ride ATV, dirt bikes and other OHVs. (Snowmobiles are a different category). All stakeholders recognize a legal riding place is necessary because if they are not available illegal riding will increase. Three of the 8 properties are designated as reserves. A collaborative process in 2005-2006 resulted in fine filter criteria which are objective. With Resource Management Plans these criteria will be applied. With recent legislation registration revenues will go to a special fund with a minimum of 25% to develop and maintain trails or acquire riding property. If the fine filter results in any changes to open or close properties for riding there will be additional public process.
- OHV organizations maintain trails. There are many riders arriving from Connecticut.
- At Wendell two areas have been logged and it looks terrible, recognize there is a debate but where is the benefit? Harvard Forest leaves forests alone? Where is the economic benefit to DCR harvesting?
 - DCR believes there is a benefit to managing for commercial timber. The state has a role in providing timber for local markets when almost all wood products are imported. In addition to supplying local wood products, state lands can provide an outstanding example for private landowners. Some forms of management can help particular tree and animal species and diversification can provide resilience. Harvard Forest does manage their properties. The economic aspect provides some revenue and in kind work. Depending on when a property was acquired the local town gets either 8% or 50% of the revenue [**depending upon the date of the DCR acquisition**].
- Disagree that logging is not destructive because of the soil compaction and erosion associated with logging.
 - Resilience is gained by helping change the forest structure, much of the current forest is 80-90 years old as a result of the agricultural history.
- Beartown State Forest has been managed for woodlands why is it designated a reserve?
 - Beartown and October Mountain were difficult decisions. The TSC recommended large tracts for reserves. Both properties ranked high for woodlands and reserves on modeling. Staff opinion was sought, and the history of the properties considered.

Some thought was given to splitting the properties **[and October Mountain has both woodland and reserve designations]** but the TSC recommended larger tracts. October Mountain has more of a history as a woodland, more roads nearby and OHV use.

- Some logging promotes openings for bird species but a small opening of 3 acres is enough for a pair of songbirds to sing but not mate. How will larger openings and early successional habitat be created?
 - The guidelines address this and it will be done in consultation with the Department of Fish and Wildlife. **[See Final Draft Management Guidelines, Appendix 4. Silvicultural Levels and Guidelines <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/ld/mgmtguidelines.pdf>]**
- The Wendell Conservation Alliance suggested a portion of the property be shifted from logging to reserve because it has a history of limited logging and is more contiguous with the portion that is designated as a reserve, is near Quabbin and a wildlife corridor. (A map was provided)
- Appreciation for the meeting and discussion.
- ATV and dirt bikes pay a fee to use properties and these users are feeling that they are being pushed out and not be given access to their fairshare.

Group #2

Facilitator/Recorder: Loraine Della Porta

DCR staff: Tim Rayworth

- The various ecoregions are not clear. Also having difficulty understanding the map containing Ecological Land Units.
- I do not believe you have diversity and redundancy.
- When it comes to reserves, it looks like 80% are in Western MA. Would it make more sense for DCR to take a percentage of each property and designate it as a reserve? This would insure that every part of the state takes an equal hit.
 - When we (DCR) are considering a reserve, we look for large, contiguous forests that are not broken up. Most of these large blocks are found in Western MA.
- It looks like 137-140 thousand acres of reserves are in western MA.
 - We had to make some judgment calls. It is difficult to make reserves just outside of Boston.
- It doesn't seem fair that we ended up with all of the reserves.
- I disagree. I'd like to see more reserves in western MA.
- What about OHV use? Will that change?
 - DCR explained process that DCR will be going through (fine filter process). DCR is trying to figure out how to balance OHV use which is popular with protecting land and water in state owned properties. A more detailed process will follow. DCR

explained new legislation that makes funding available through registration fees with a minimum of 25% of revenue dedicate to creating and maintaining opportunities for legal OHV riding. [See Anticipated Question #15]

- Please consider designating Wendell State Forest as a reserve.
- We are concerned that some places have been over-logged or logged in a way that has left the forest distressed.
- Montague Road to Mormon Hollow should be parkland. Logging has been allowed in the past.
- Local contractors were hired. Should make sure only qualified people are used.
 - DCR will be doing a Resource Management Plan for each property.
- We want them designated before contractors strip properties of trees.
- I think it is important that we use local wood and not depend on other states or Canada for our wood. We all use it. It just needs to be done right.
 - It is DCR's goal to use only highly qualified foresters who will demonstrate "excellent forestry".
- How will the public be made aware of when an area will be cut?
 - Public notice will be given and the public will have an opportunity to go on a site visit and provide input. Every effort will be made to give a lot of advanced notice.
- Does this mean DCR will continue to do "clear-cuts"
 - As was recommended by the TSC, DCR cutting will be limited to small openings of 1/3 to 5 acres. There will be uneven-aged management which will allow for wildlife species to survive in the event of a natural disaster such as the tornado we experienced yesterday. If all of the trees are the same size and they blow down, there is nothing left.
- I know some people are against this – but there are actual scientific studies that support clear-cutting for wildlife habitat protection. Some private owners are paying people to cut – there are a lot of forests in western MA that have only old trees – people are cutting to achieve new growth.
- Will the trees cut be used for biomass?
 - DCR is not managing its land for biomass. With that said, we can only control the contracting process and have little control of where the wood actually ends up.
- Would DCR be willing to stipulate that it will not sell its wood to biomass plants? **[DCR draft Guidelines for woodlands focus on the condition of the forest so that adequate tops and branches are left on all harvest sites. DCR guidelines are as strict and in some cases more strict than the Forest Guild guidelines for retention of wood on harvest sites for wildlife and soil nutrient purposes.]**
- We are all equal shareholders in the land. No one person or group should get to say how the land is used or not used. We need to balance everyone's interests.
- Most of the land in question was bought by DCR in the late 1800's when no one wanted it.
- I've read that it is not profitable to log so why do people do it? Does the state actually make money from it?

- If it was not profitable, it would not be called a timber “sale”. Some revenue is generated; however, that is not the state’s sole motivation. We want to demonstrate excellent forestry for private landowners as well as support a local, renewable wood products industry. We are importing about 90% of our wood products.
- We could be manufacturing furniture and cabinets here in MA like we used to. So many of our saw mills and wood products businesses have gone under in recent years.
 - Also, some of the revenue we (DCR) generates is put back into the properties through improvement of roads, installation of gates, etc.
 - Foresters we employ – most of their job is not timber-sale related –only 30-40% of what they do relates to timber. The rest of their job is related to making sure boundaries are marked, locating and clearing trails, etc.
- In the woodlands and reserves, will only primitive-style signs be allowed? What would be wrong with having trail names and some directions out there?
 - We (DCR) also look at this from a public safety perspective. Holyoke is a good example of how we numbered junctions and marked trails to help people find their way.
- Has DCR considered membership or “user fees”? We could all pay for what we use.
 - Not that I am aware of. We have parking fees for “day use” areas only.
- DCR should consider selling an “Annual Pass” for parks and properties. [DCR sells annual Parks Passes, see <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/parkspass.htm>].
- I want to say publicly that I strongly support this final draft. DCR has come a long way. I am very happy to see the public’s input reflected in this latest draft – thank you.
- Park designation – Dubuque. It is a large park and I’m not sure how it was surveyed. There are a lot of historical aspects to it and it has species like Lady Slippers. It should be 75% reserves and then woodlands. Please consider that.

Group #3

Recorder: Mette Kreutzmann

Facilitator: Matt Thompson

DCR staff:

- I live in Wendell where a large portion is state forest. I’m concerned about Farley Road (Bear Mountain) as it is a very spiritual place and people outside don’t know this, or appreciate this. I would like everything north of Farley Road to be classified as a reserve. Also, I notice that in the East there are mainly parks, whereas in the West, few parks.
 - Woodlands are mostly in the central and western parts; and the Metro Boston area is mostly parklands. ELUs were used to group properties for the designations. If a property scored high in one type, then it was typically designated as such.
- We need more detailed maps – need to see elevation to really see the designation. Also would like to see the criteria online.
 - Bigger maps with more details are in the process. We heard this request at another meeting and the GIS people are working on it. They will be posted in the next few

weeks, but drilling down to this kind of details, takes some time to get it right as lots of data goes into making the maps. **[Please see additional information available at <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/ld/landscapedesignations.htm>]**

- It would be helpful to see roads on the maps and also how properties scored.
 - The comparison map shows how modeling was done, and as you can see some areas scored high in all three designations and some score low in all three.
- The woodland designation is extensive in the west. How does it comply with the Global Warming Solutions Act? There has been lots of clear cutting since 1990; lots of CO2 released. To meet the Global Warming Solutions Act in 2050 of 80% reduction, it would require restoration and better modeling of forests.
- The state loses money when logging is done. The taxpayer is not making money –why is it allowed if it is not profitable?
 - Timber revenue goes to the General Fund which is used for all sorts of things, including related to forest management and better practices. **[Revenue from a timber sale is not the reason to do logging. Forest management via harvesting is a tool for DCR to better manage the forest. DCR foresters do a wide variety of activities that do not involve managing timber sales. Some of those duties include forest inventories, boundary marking, encroachment monitoring, forest health surveys for insects, invasive species control, forest education and emergency response].**
- Is there a way to do a cost-analysis to see if timber sale is profitable? Shouldn't timber sale at least cover that area where the cutting is done? **[See above. It should also be noted that timber sale contracts sometimes include “in kind” services to improve the property where the sale is taking place]**
- Do the designations drill down to areas used for sale and areas used for habitat?
 - No, not directly. But take the Blue Hills. It shows different zones within one designation. The zones are about levels of protection. The zones can be applied to all three designations. Another example is Mount Greylock –designated a reserve, but there are bubbles of parklands – e.g. intensive use areas.
- As I understand it, the goal of woodlands, is to demonstrate great forestry - why are you not demonstrating that in the east and in Boston? Do it in high population areas so that they can see and learn how it is done
 - There is no commercial forestry in parklands. There is forest management. **[It should be noted that some woodlands designations are proposed for properties in the east].**
- It would be good if you (DCR) could become better at getting the message out about what you are doing and why so that people can understand what they are seeing / experiencing.
 - Good point. We have to get better at messaging.
- If timber harvesting is not done in the ways of best practice; what is the strategy for recourse?
 - Service foresters approve the cutting plans – Chapter 132 compliance. They sign off on the plan and review the work. But we want your feedback as well. **[Going forward, DCR will add more stringent requirements to timber harvesting**

contracts, and will not do business with anyone who cannot meet the required standards].

- In western part, areas were diversified, wildlife habitats. In the last 70 years, during the Depression, non-native habitat tree species were planted, which are now not healthy for the areas. Diversification is nice – we need open and wooded areas – different sizes, ages, etc. What is DCR doing to go back to more healthy conditions? Also, harvest money goes into the General Fund – the money should stay with the area. **[Forest diversity is important for habitat needs and to demonstrate to the public, private forest landowners and the forest industry different ways to manage different forest types. A balance of woodlands and reserves also increases diversity versus having all land in one designation.]**
- Eight percent of the revenue from timber sale goes back to the town. This is not widely known.
 - This is correct. **[And for more recently acquired properties, 50% of the revenue is returned to the town].**
- The money that comes back goes into road repair. Now the service folks also have to clear roads, as if they don't already have enough to do. There is money for road repairs and getting other people to do the work.
- Some years ago, there was an incident in Warwick – DCR did very little communicating about what they were doing. In order to avoid a similar incident, you have to keep communicating with us.
- I'm from Deerfield and I am concerned about the trails for snowmobiles. Trail access is not good. It's a big concern! We maintain the roadways using our own equipment; we are not looking for money or compensation; just cooperation. We help the trail system. Bike and walking trails get all the resources. We need far reaching trails; giving us access to ride in a 6-mile loop is not going to do it. When we ride, we go far. Greylock is the hot spot for snowmobiling.
 - Snowmobiling is allowed on existing trails.
- What if we build new trails? **[Please see Anticipated Question #16 <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/ld/ho2-Anticipated%20Questions.pdf>]**
- How do you advertise pre-harvest walks?
 - Through the Public Affairs Office – they send out a press release.
- They should contact the town government to get the word out. Communication used to be better. We went from adversarial to a more cooperative relationship. Now it seems to go back to the old ways of not communicating. Invasive species – they are a public safety issues – if you mow in some places, it seems to kill them. I know there is a concern about liability and allowing volunteers to do a lot of the work. We hope that volunteers can work with DCR – we can help you – you are low on personnel. Let us help you get the work done.
- Prisoners can also do some work.
 - Some community service organizations don't charge. The Office of Probation charges for their services
- Give volunteers access to ATVs, so they can go out and assist.

- Snowmobilers put groomers out to groom the trails using their own equipment. This upset the unions – a big issue in Central Mass.
- Listening to you all – such a diverse group – this plan will affect all users. All state parks will be limited a little more in some manner. Timber harvest makes a mess, but it rejuvenates the area, just like a fire does.
- Poor logging was done in an area – communication from DCR gone bad. People felt there was no recourse. I'm looking for you to provide a hot line.
 - I'm still new in this position. There has been controversy in forest management. We are re-thinking our forest management. We want to hear from you and provide an avenue for input.
- One bad apple should not rot the whole basket. There are many ways to punish a bad apple (poor logging).
- When there is a fire, the big trees often survive. The loggers go after the big trees as there is money in harvesting them.
- When bad forestry is done, there is a knee jerk reaction to ban forestry. We have to be careful to not take down a whole industry. Protocols need to be in place.
 - It supports the local economy.
- In 1950, there were 351 sawmills; now there are less than 20.
- Concern about a property in the town of Rowe. There are different types of wetlands and lots of diversity. Be careful to protect this area. There are rare species. It is an incredible forest. Now managed as woodlands – I urge you to do right by it. There are tons of trails.
- Educate the public. When you have 100 acres in Dubuque or Holyoke area – show people what it looked like - what you are doing – what it will look like afterwards; and ask for input. Get the message to the public so that people will take notice. There are moose here; this was never the case before; we need areas with grass and cloves.
- Do you have a website for comments after this process?
 - The email address listed on the agenda is specific to this process. It will close eventually. But you can email us at: massparks@state.ma.us [**Public comments on the draft designations and management guidelines final draft are welcome at designation.comments@state.ma.us until August 26th, 2011**].
- Do this kind of thing every year. This is an on-going process.

Group #4

Facilitator: Richard Tillberg

Recorder: Courtney Breese

DCR staff: Tim Rayworth, David Goodwin

- Draft criteria fall – reviewed while map generated – and map was generated before the final draft. How do we get here without other information being released? What is this really based on? Is it fair?
 - When DCR opened the comment period for the draft principles/guidelines - that went through all of February and March – then we began the process of looking at properties using the Ecological Land Unit (ELU) map. Criteria came in part from The Nature Conservancy.
- The only ELU I know was completed was Worcester Plateau – but this was not done for the rest of the state.
 - The Nature Conservancy developed these ELUs, which are organized by similar properties. For example, there is an ELU for the Cape, southeastern Massachusetts and north by the border of New Hampshire that shared sandy, gravelly soil. There were others with similar soil, but at a different elevation.
- Where can I find the ELUs online?
- They can be found on the Landscape Designation Process website [**See <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/ld/landscapedesignations.htm>**]
- Is the ELU information (explanation of what they are) in the plan?

No, but we should be able to put it online. [**Please see <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/ld/landscapedesignations.htm> for more details. Ecological Land Units group properties according to similar characteristics of three factors: elevation, geology and landform (a measure of topography)**].
- Why is ELU the highest criteria?
 - It is not the criteria, but how we applied the criteria to properties within each ELU. The Technical Steering Committee (TSC) report said to look at redundancies – so we went to The Nature Conservancy. The ELUs were an organizing function for applying criteria.
- Conway – concerned with woodland design. Waterway, private land. Feel designation is due to proximity to lumber mills. We've had a previous issue with oil spills from logging, and don't see logging as beneficial to water bodies. I don't see anything in this process to change forestry practices and have not seen changes. Hopefully State Park Foresters will be better with this.
 - The way plans for forest management are written in the management guidelines – there are restrictions on size, levels of silviculture, etc. included under the woodland designation. Regarding designation – criteria in reserves was continuous forest block and biology. Woodlands model for same property had twelve criteria that were not weighted, which included proximity to saw mills, but the decision was not based solely on that.
- Can we look at specific properties online?
 - Specific property maps will be online after these meetings, but before the comment period ends. [**Please see maps of each property at <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/ld/printmap.pdf>**]

- I live in Wendell State Forest. There have been two cuts previously that ruined roads, waterways. What is the current plan for road repair? My road is on DCR land, but unclaimed.
 - One reason for timber sales is infrastructure – it is built into contracts. Going forward DCR will have a process for planning for this, so concerns can get addressed. **[Outside of timber sales, roads in need of repair are within all DCR properties are prioritized and limited funding directed toward the most serious needs.]**
- So, if my road is destroyed, can I contact someone?
 - Yes – Bill Hill is Director of Forest Management.
- If DCR allows people to use a road, they shouldn't allow it to get destroyed – should take responsibility.
- I live in Montague – on a town road but the town does not maintain. Road issues are tough.
- Town harvest – if they had no provision for oil protection in the contract, then it is the town's fault.
- Service forester must follow the cutting plan.
- Acquisition – property acquired by the state – how does it get into process (historical use or deeded properties)?
 - This is a little fuzzy – hopefully we have identified most, as we have done a lot of research. Where we didn't know – for each specific area we will have a more detailed plan. If we knew about it we remained true, but if you know of something we missed then please let us know.
 - Some areas were designated for forestry previously, this did factor into the woodlands model. Also looked at early successional versus late successional habitat.
- How will you designate in the future?
 - In general, when new acquisitions about existing properties, they will take on the designation of the sister property. For reserves, the FRSAC (Forest Reserve Scientific Advisory Committee) may weigh-in. This plan will be examined every ten years, we will meet to determine what tweaks may be needed. CHECK
- What is the five-year review referenced in the guidelines? Wilderness areas in reserves that would be examined every five years.
 - DCR felt there was no true wilderness in the lands now. But, the five year piece is in case areas should move towards the characteristics of wilderness, we will be reexamining.
- Trail access during harvesting – off-highway vehicles where allowed seem to get more attention than any other use in the guidelines. It says you will close roads not needed and consult with the town. I would suggest that if you designate a snowmobile trail, if there is no alternative for a way to pass, it could sever use. But for any use you could be looking at cutting trail use. How might we incorporate this when planning a harvest?
 - That is where the public comment period comes in. **[See Anticipated Question #16 at <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/ld/ho2-Anticipated%20Questions.pdf>].**

- As part of the guidelines, I would suggest that if trail access might potentially be eliminated or degraded, you build in a provision for mitigation.
- Concerned with Holyoke Range – it should be a parkland.
 - In looking at the Ecological Land Units (ELUs), that area scored high as reserves, and the other side (Mt. Tom) was more contiguous and had higher population density and a higher intensive use area.
- I live in Wendell – the woodland area goes right up to my property and I am part of the reserve area – what are the implications for access and living there?
 - Woodland will continue to provide you access, but unsure about how much DCR will manage in reserves.
- But you won't stop me from going in and fixing my road?
 - There has to be a legal status for the road that can be found out.
- Visioning made recommendation of 15,000 acres reserve. October Mountain, Dubuque are large enough – why didn't you make them reserves?
 - We could have designated some, but it came down to October Mountain and Beartown, and Beartown was chosen (11,000 acres) **[and some of October Mountain is designated a reserve]**.
- Is this open to change?
 - Yes – but you must give us a compelling argument for it.
 - As we went through the ELUs, this was a framework to think about getting the three designations across each of the ELUs.
 - We came to this realization early and that was one area among all parameters that made it next to impossible. Within ELUs, many of the largest chunks are reserves.
- Catamount – trail system still legal to go through?
 - Yes – especially snowmobiles that don't touch the land.
- Can we get larger maps to review?
 - Yes, we will have PDFs online that you can enlarge greatly **[Please see maps of each property at <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/ld/printmap.pdf>]**
- We have a letter from the conservation commission with an argument for reserves – can we submit this tonight?
 - Yes. And please note that comments that explain why a property should be a different designation are the most helpful.
- What about fires in reserves – will you let them burn?
 - That is the plan, unless they threaten other properties or people.
- You will let natural fires burn, rather than man-made?
 - Yes.
- So if someone lights a fire you will fight, but if lightning strikes you will not?

- That is a tough distinction to make, but the threat to property is the most important distinction.

Comments, Suggestions, and Questions Submitted

Deerfield June 2, 2011

Suggestions:

- The break out groups should each be given a topic so that like-minded issues can be covered more deeply. Too much time was spent talking about topics I wasn't interested in in my group.
- Have a forest "hotline." A dedicated email address to report concerns about timber harvesting activities.
- Notify conservation commissions and schedule so as not to conflict with their scheduled meetings. Hand out print-outs of PowerPoint slides.
- As a citizen of Wendell I very strongly advocate for a reserve status for the State Forest north of Farley Road known as Bear Mountain. It has significant spiritual meaning for many people in Wendell. Given how little land we have left as forest, I believe we shouldn't harvest any trees that don't need to be cut except to improve the forest. Every tree is a carbon sink.

Comments:

- How did I hear about it? DCR email AND affiliate organization. Dividing up makes manageable sizes but instills suspicion re divide and conquer. No opportunity to hear reports from different groups. Small groups could be based on interest so we don't wait through discussions of little interest.
- Please keep private forestlands out of this conversation and promote the forest products industry as much as possible. Keep existing access to private land thru state land even if turned into a reserve.
- 1. Re: woodlands recreation and public access guidelines – 4.4.E – existing guidelines only state that trails and roads will be closed as needed. Instead, mitigation for continuing access should be the norm. For example, snowmobile trail corridors connect areas across the state. If a timber harvest severs a corridor trail access in large areas can be affected. It's worth noting that in 4.4.F OHV use receives such special attention. 2. Re: Reserve recreation and

public access – re: 2.4.B – “Forest roads that are not maintained for vehicle use” should stipulate “in the winter,” the point being that a seasonally maintained road that isn’t plowed would certainly be permitted.

**DCR Forest Futures Implementation Spring Meetings
Landscape Designation Process
Meeting #5
Westfield, MA
June 6, 2011**

Small Group Notes

Note: These notes were prepared by the Massachusetts Office of Public Collaboration, who facilitated these meetings. Comments made by DCR staff at the meetings are indented. DCR added information shown in brackets after the meetings to address questions and provide context. All other comments were from public participants.

Group #1

Facilitator/Recorder: Bill Logue

DCR staff: ?

- The parklands are mostly to the east of 495, it would be fairer to have more parklands in the western part of the state, there should be a mix. Why were all the parks in the east even included in the calculation?
 - The Technical Steering Committee recommendation was to look at the entire state for DCR Division of State Parks and Recreation and Urban Parks.
- For Gilbert Bliss it was listed high as a reserve but for the Town of Chesterfield there is a heavily used trail for hiking, biking, sledding. Reserve may be the wrong classification based on the use of this 6 mile road and trail that runs along the river edge.
 - Other areas designated as reserves have roads as well, for example, Mt Greylock and Mohawk.
- The western portion of the state took the brunt of the reserve designation.
 - 140,000 of the 310,000 acres in the park system are in the west. The ecological land units are across the state and a reserve was wanted in each and the reserves are intended to be larger blocks of forest core. The properties were modeled for each designation.
- Please explain the Blue Hills zoning.
 - The zoning process within a designation is part of the Resource Management Planning process for each site. For forestry projects (in the western part of the state for example) there are levels of forestry with level one being limited cutting due to slopes, wetlands, riparian issues, etc. For zone 1, as in Blue Hills there are special protections that limit types of activity and or access to protect species during growing and breeding seasons for example.[Please see Blue Hills Resource Management

Plan at <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/rmp/rmp-bluehills.htm> and Land Stewardship Zoning at <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/rmp/liszguidelines.htm>)

- Tolland State Forest and Beartown State Forest the OHV community maintains trails. There are few places to ride and the fine filter criteria will reduce them further.
 - The Administration has committed to [at least] 60% reserves and parklands. These properties modeled high for both woodlands and reserves.
- The trail density and population density are different in the western part of the state and are different for motorized use. The allocations should be made based on the percentage of users.
 - The uses will continue while the fine filter is applied. Recreation is compatible with the reserve designation. Beartown was difficult to decide because of the modeling. The northwest corner of October Mountain is largely road-less.
- Prior to 1996 there was significant ATV riding; properties and trails have steadily reduced. The reserve classification is due to political pressure.
- Will there be passive recreation in reserves?
 - All lands will be available for recreation. There will be no new motorized trails in reserves.
- If a bordering property owner stops allowing riding and rerouting requires going through a reserve what happens? OHV use brings money in.
 - There has been a steady loss in available OHV locations. Eight properties allow it. This is a significant concern because if there are not legal places to ride there will be an increase in illegal activity that no one wants (OHV community, state, environmentalists and others). About 90,000 households in the state participate in motorized use. The fine filter is a follow up to the 2007 coarse filter of properties as a whole. The fine filter looks at the trail level. **[Please see Motorized Trail Recreation Facility Assessment Policy available at http://www.mass.gov/dcr/recreate/ohv_policy.pdf and Anticipated Question #1 at <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/ld/ho2-Anticipated%20Questions.pdf>].**
- There is political pressure to eliminate OHV riding.
 - DCR is trying to use the scientific criteria to address riding locations rather than allowing emotion to control the discussion.
 - The recent chapter 202 legislation on OHVs creates a fund though registration fees, at least 25% to be used for trails and acquisitions, the funds may also be used for education and enforcement. Additional riding opportunities are needed.
- Is there riding on Division of Water Supply lands?
 - No
- Skidders create more pollution than OHVs.

- With logging it can create resilience. There has been steady loss of trails from limited maintenance, the logging allows for the ability to maintain some of the roads and trails.
- What is the economic rationale for logging?
 - Logging may occur in an area maybe once every 20 years on average. Massachusetts has some of the most stringent laws in the country. Best management practices with soils, etc. Logging equipment can disturb the soils but it can be done well and restored afterwards. About 35-40% of a forester's job relates to commercial harvesting and timber sales pay for that portion of the salary.
- This process started because of commercial harvesting, how can we be confident that it will be done right this time.
 - The genesis was bad cuts several years ago. If and when cutting starts again there will use best management practices, there will be no clear cutting and steps will be taken to protect the land.
 - As projects are planned there will be walks with the public to talk about what is planned, why, what it will look like and visits to sites with similar work to show how it will look some time later. Projects will be posted on the website, there will be written comment opportunity and the forest listserve will be used.
- Will there be a list of all properties and their designations with statistics? **[Please see <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/ld/landscapedesignations.htm>]**
- There should be a big parkland in the west.
 - Recreational use will be allowed in all designations.
- Will the fine filter be applied to bikes and bike trails? There is a double standard in applying it only to OHVs.
 - The fine filter applies only to OHV use. DCR is trying to do a better job with a sustainable trail system.
- There should be user fees for all users.
 - DCR has looked at this in other states. Any fees are returned to the general fund **[with the exception of specific retained revenue accounts that allow DCR to retain approx. \$8 million in user fees collected and the new Off Highway Vehicle Trust Fund with registration and penalty fees deposited in it].**

Group #2
 Facilitator: Matt Thompson
 DCR staff/Recorder: Tim Rayworth

- It is extraordinarily difficult to find yourself on the map – please send GIS data to Franklin County regional Planning Committee. **[Please see details, including maps at <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/ld/landscapedesignations.htm>]**
- Is there rhyme or reason to the order of RMP development? **[In 2008, DCR completed an analytical survey of its properties to establish approx. 80 planning groups and prioritize the order in which RMPs should be completed.]**
- Will restriction be placed on areas pre-RMP so forest management and recreation won't impact sensitive areas? Worry in the meantime that sensitive areas that haven't been identified will be impacted. **[Please see Anticipated Question #9 at <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/ld/ho2-Anticipated%20Questions.pdf>]**
- What are the faults of the GIS models?
 - Where models are inconclusive – checked with DCR Operations staff – ground “truthed” as many areas as possible.
- What did you do when models didn't spit out a designation? **[DCR assembled a diverse, statewide internal committee and discussed the model results for each property, using local knowledge and other factors to supplement model results.]**
 - Peter Church used the Comparison Map to explain the steps .
- More Woodlands/Reserves in the West – more Parklands in the East – how can that be balanced? Concern that the fine filter on Reserves in West will exclude OHV in them. Beartown is an example. **[Please see Anticipated Question #15 at <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/ld/ho2-Anticipated%20Questions.pdf>]**
- DCR is putting a lot of land into reserves that was originally intended as managed forest land – less revenue for towns and state; loss of opportunity with timber on ground.
- Warwick – 50% land is state owned. Most of frontage is in Reserves with backland as Woodlands. Best access and most productive areas should be Woodlands – is there a chance to reserve? **[DCR is open to comments and suggestions, including for specific changes in designations]**
- Can ribbons of Parklands be established around existing trail networks for OHV? To protect against the fine filter risk of loss? **[The actual designation of properties currently open to OHV's is less important than the coarse and fine filter analysis which actually assesses the property's ability to handle the impacts of OHV's. Please see Motorized Trail Recreation Facility Assessment Policy available at http://www.mass.gov/dcr/recreate/ohv_policy.pdf]**
- Water supply land question – how often will the designation guidelines be reviewed?
 - Every ten years.
- Can Guidelines be adopted at that time to incorporate DWSP guidelines in our guidelines? **[While the two Divisions cooperate on development of guidelines and best management practices, the Divisions have different mandates and need guidelines that address the purposes for which the land was acquired by the state (DCR Parks for a combination of recreation, forestry and resource protection and DCR DWSP for water supply management and protection.)]**
- Open space plan in Warwick from 2002 was approved – is DCR bound by that?

- No, particularly if local plan is less restrictive than DCR's plan.
- How can you back-up wording: "ATV and OHV have greatest impact to DCR lands."? **[Certainly, unauthorized ATV and OHV use on trails susceptible to erosion have caused large washouts and erosion in several locations with gullies several feet deep. Given the hundreds of thousands of acres of land under DCR management and the hundreds of thousands of users and hundreds of facilities in this system, adding the word "among" before "greatest impact" above could be appropriate.]**
- Policing of OHV use is welcome (comment by OHV user)
- If you continue to restrict legal opportunities, you increase the illegal activities – why should DCR's low level of maintenance penalize users?
 - Need more stringent laws. Wise use of registration money to acquire land and patrol land (EPOs)

Group #3

Facilitator: Richard Tillberg

Recorder: Mette Kreutzmann

DCR staff: Paul Lyons

- Holyoke and Mt. Tom are very similar – how come they were given different designations?
 - Proposed designations were guided by the models, ELUs and staff's knowledge about the areas – **[Mt Tom Reservation has more facilities (ballfields, picnic areas, etc. and paved roads than Skinner State Park)].**
- The 60/40% split – seems arbitrary – how were these percentages arrived at?
 - It is not arbitrary; some "science" was involved, , but largely from people's value-based input considered by a committee of experts. Then there was the commitment from the former Secretary of EEA and the Patrick Administration.
- My concern is cutting, but what got moved in there are trails for OHVs. I see the map – Beartown, October Mountain are Reserves, which is death for OHV. Now comes the fine filter application, which will shut us out. Since 1986, there has been no increase in OHV trails. Now, less and less – only access to 100 miles of trails. We need trails! There is a trend for less trails.
 - Perhaps it seems like a trend or patterns. Savoy, Georgetown... at the same time, some positive recent developments – like the OHV registration program which was founded. The registration money goes into trails and 25% into sport. So a new pattern is forming – seen in other states too. With more money coming in, more resources will be available.
- A reserves area means no commercial harvesting. Take the Robinson State Park – lots of dead forest. Is there a plan to clean up the dead pine? Tax dollars are used to maintain trails. We could clear up the dead forests. Harvest as a way to clean up.
 - Funding is a challenge; more so in Parklands and Reserves as no way to raise funds from logging. We are not going to be fully hands-off in reserves. Invasive species

management will occur if there is a public safety issue. How this is paid for is still an issue – we have to find other ways. We recognize the challenges with some of these designations. Regarding OHV use – we have created a set of criteria to evaluate DCR properties – the coarse and fine filter applications which are now to be applied.

- Snowmobiles – we used to be able to ride west to east and north to south – through the reserves.
 - There are smaller concerns regarding snowmobiles – wheeled vehicles have a much smaller environmental impact. The major corridors have not been interrupted.
- The fine filter will lock us out of the reserves.
 - The fine filter application may open up more trails. **[Please see Motorized Trail Recreation Facility Assessment Policy available at http://www.mass.gov/dcr/recreate/ohv_policy.pdf]**
- Twining Lake property near Tolland – bought for \$3 million – what happens there?
 - As new properties are acquired, they will be appropriately designated so that the 60/40% split is maintained.
- Some of the most productive Woodlands are now designated as Reserves. For example, October Mountain – western part – between that and Beartown; now both reserves.
 - Some very difficult decisions were made at times – some counter-intuitive because of the **[at least]** 60/40% split. Many people want productive Woodlands, but just as many people want more Reserves. We did the best we could. I encourage you to write your thoughts down and there might be adjustments made.
- The 60/40 split seems political. Set by an official who is no longer there. Arbitrary. I don't care what it is called, but I'm concerned about how land is used. Why not 50/50?
 - Some people wanted 80/20. This is a compromise of sorts and they have become our marching orders.
- Can you say more about what is permitted and prohibited?
 - I encourage you to pick up a copy of the final Guidelines and look there for the details. It is our intent to keep as much public access as possible in all three designations. Reserves have fewer activities.
- Regarding the 60/40% split and what is set aside as Parklands. For example, Hampton Ponds is designated as a Parkland; it is very small. Perhaps there should be another category for space that is too small for reserves and woodlands. Seems to default as parklands, but it takes away from other parklands that we think of as real/true parklands.
 - Golf courses, skating rinks, buildings, etc. are also not part of the equation. Parklands is seen as an active use area; intensive use. **[All DCR properties were evaluated and draft designated – some small properties were designated woodlands to serve as small demonstration forests and certainly many small, heavily used properties are appropriate as parklands]**
- I applaud DCR's efforts. You have done an excellent job. You need flexibility regarding the 60/40% split and each area and actual use – this is causing lots of issues. Similar properties are designated differently. Feels like you had to put something in – arbitrary.

- We are open to changes if you make a compelling argument. Please note that if we change something in one place, we must also make changes somewhere else to keep the ratio of [at least] 60/40. It would be helpful if you have suggestions for where we make those changes as well.
- I recognize that DCR is the central point of contact on this. If I were to send comments to others, e.g. state representatives/legislators. Who would be the appropriate entity? Especially re the 60/40 split.
 - You have a right to write to your legislators at any time. **[DCR welcomes public comments on the draft designations and management guidelines final draft are welcome at designation.comments@state.ma.us until August 26th, 2011].**
- This is my first meeting. I'm an OHV enthusiast. I'm supposed to send a \$40 check to register. Why should I give this money when I'm losing more land to ride on? Hatfield McCoy (??) trails – last year – great time riding – steep grade – how do they keep their trails? Trail riding system took in millions in revenue from ridership. We are a dying creed. Not getting a free ride in this state; getting fleeced. More land disappears. Why register? What if no one registered? Then what?
- We are the only ones paying. We assist and clean up, and maintain trails. Hikers don't pay. \$40 to Massachusetts; \$50 to Uncle Sam. Snowmobiles, yes, but why pay for dirt bikes?
- State forests developed as multiple uses, incl. timber harvesting. Do you have the rights to take away the legal right to use trail ridership?
 - We are researching such original agreements so that we don't take away any legal rights or covenants on lands.
- Look in the Massachusetts Constitution re Public Lands laws.
 - In the FFVP, in the appendix, there is a detailed analysis of laws regarding state public lands **[Please see http://www.mass.gov/dcr/news/publicmeetings/tsc_final_recommendations.htm]**. I do not believe that the TSC and our recommendations are in violation of any of these, but let us know if you notice something.
- Are there plans to make this permanent?
 - The plan is to review the designations again in ten years as things change and we will have learned from these ten years.
- How are you going to enforce any of it?
 - Enforcement is another critical piece. The rangers have experienced budget cuts – as has the whole agency, so it is difficult. We must prioritize – that is the reality.
- Was there an old plan prior to this plan?
 - No, this is the first plan regarding designations. The Management Guidelines tried to keep things as they were historically on most properties.
- If not enough rangers to cover park systems. How are you going to manage them?
 - We have to do the best we can with what we have. We don't need much management in Reserves unless there is a public safety issue.

- Will you allow foresters to manage woodlands or will they be taken out to manage elsewhere?
 - Foresters will manage the woodlands.

Comments, Suggestions, and Questions Submitted

Westfield June 6, 2011

Suggestions:

- In order to raise funds to help support and maintain the trail network for ORV use, I recommend severely increasing fines for illegal ORV use. Strong enough to help support DCR with more funds.
- Send data to Franklin Regional Planning Department for map and they will GIS it.
- I would like to see more Parklands area in the western portion of the state, specifically, Beartown state forest and the other surrounding DCR properties.
- I am concerned that the definition of the fine filter criteria will possibly impact the existence of ORV trails. I suggest that existing trails are designated under different criteria in order to preserve their use for immediate and future use. Specifically at Beartown State Forest.
- I am very concerned about the reduction or elimination of the existing ORV trails specifically at Beartown State Forest. Is it possible to designate the existing trail network as Parklands to preserve their use for the future? Trails have been maintained very well and we want to ensure the possibility of repairing or re-routing where necessary to maintain safe and environmentally responsible trails.
- During the small group breakout session, Tim from DCR, stated that within Reserve designation, re-routing existing OHV trails is still allowed, and this is different from creating new OHV trails. This should be more clearly outlined in the management guidelines as well as fine filter criteria.
- Re Beartown State Forest; I suggest that existing OHV trail system be designated as Parklands or Woodlands to allow for more flexibility of new trails construction and maintenance as a result of the fine filter criteria process (i.e. segregate portion of Beartown (reserve) as Parklands or Woodlands within the reserve)
- The Franklin Regional Planning Agency and local planning boards have difficulty commenting on specifics of the landscape designations on the ground in the member towns due to the scale of the map and lack of reference points. Depending on when better maps become available, it may be necessary to extend the August 26th deadline for groups that meet monthly.

- Per Gary Briere's comments – OHV Fund established to add new trail areas/maintain existing trail networks, etc – seems to be in direct contradiction to designation in the western Mass area where much land (especially, Beartown state forest) has been designated as a reserve.
- The ORV users need more trails not less, why register if we are losing more and more trails each year. Less legal trails will only result in more illegal trails and less people registering, thus less money for enforcement. Please, we need more trails and everyone will benefit.
- Do you have the legal right to not allow forest management on state forests as they were originally set for as well as other uses? I was told the areas of excellent timber growth were to be left as working forest. You have taken Beartown and the Western October Mountain. Two of the best for reserves – can we believe what you say! Both these areas have been managed for generations! Don't take the management Forester out of Woodlands, put in Reserves where there should be nothing to do! October Mountain Reserve is it on the flat or on the great growing site?
- With these reserves being natural will you: let them burn if a forest fire happens? Will you let insect infestations run their course? Will you let ice storms do their damage? All plus more are natural events, with no commercial work, you have forced any work to be paid by our taxes like Robinson state park now even before the tornado needed on taxes to make safe rather than a common sense harvest as was designed. now you have increased this to 60% **[See draft guidelines for the three designations – certainly public safety issues in reserves and parklands will be addressed as necessary where fire danger or spread of serious invasives and other impacts are concerned. The balance made will allow DCR to focus on doing high quality, demonstration forestry on the most appropriate properties for forest management. It should be noted that DCR's woodland rating model is a unique tool that few other land managers have developed or used]]**
- If you take the parks from 495 East out of this map, it doesn't appear that you have a good proportion of parklands. Those parks east of 495 have always been protected and should have not been included in the percentage of parklands. Not fair. Take the parks east of 495 out of the percentage and designate more Parklands. How will the parks be protected forever and stay forever a park? An act of legislation? **[See Anticipated Question #7]**
- Prefer general comment session with everyone participating rather than limited small groups.
- Have speaker in front of a large group speak louder or use a microphone. Sound of the room's Air Conditioner competed with the speakers. Thanks for working on the project of Parklands, etc
- It seems that the 60/40 commitment is too restricted. A more flexible ratio would cause less disruption and controversy. When I look at two state forests (Mount Tom and Holyoke Range) with the same use and [cannot read], they get different designations.
- Remove current/proposed Reserves from areas with current OHV operation

Comments:

- Too much land has been designated as woodlands. It appears arbitrary because you have taken the maximum allowed for woodlands. The Patrick Administration said at least 60%,

not exactly 60%. The TSC wrote that at least 81,000 acres should be parklands and more probably 90,000 would qualify as parklands. The properties in the northeast section – Georgetown Rowley, Harold Parker should be parklands or reserves. You have counted as parklands roads, swimming pools and other facilities that have no trees and need no protections from harvesting, getting to the required 60% and allowing for maximum harvesting. This is not meeting the intent of the FFVP when lands were to serve social/recreational needs of the public – with wood production only one service. I would like 100,000 maximum woodlands.

- Beartown State Forest has 25 miles of ORV trails – with the fine filter designation – trails will be closed – with only a few state parks left with trails – what are you going to do with our registration fees, and why should we register ORVs if you can't ride anywhere. You are going to be fined or arrested if caught. So why register or stop for Police or ORV Police. My son had to take a safety course to ride – he will be the safest illegal rider in jail.
- Amount of land to be designate as Reserves is very much over-allocated. The limited amount of actual forestry management in the future will be very little.
- Percentage of designation 60/40 needs adjustment. Too much land is designated as Reserves.
- As a teenager over 50 years ago, I enjoyed riding my bicycle to the swimming facility at Robinson State Park. Today, the North Westfield street entrance is permanently closed; the road is in lousy shape and the bathhouse? – What a shame that the state has allowed this degrade. I moved from Agawam in 1961 and have returned in 2009.
- Have not seen any reference to educational use of any properties. With Gov Patrick's emphasis on stem education and MCAS questions related to environmental issues, shouldn't there be education component?

**DCR Forest Futures Implementation Spring Meetings
Landscape Designation Process
Meeting #6
Dighton, MA
June 7, 2011**

Small Group Notes

Note: These notes were prepared by the Massachusetts Office of Public Collaboration, who facilitated these meetings. Comments made by DCR staff at the meetings are indented. DCR added information shown in brackets after the meetings to address questions and provide context. All other comments were from public participants.

Group #1

Facilitator: Matt Thompson

DCR staff/Recorder: Tim Rayworth

- How much influence did the public have in draft designations?
 - Models used to draft designations, then given to staff and now public
- Will public have access to polling information?
 - Yes, it will be posted to the website
- Has there ever been a study of how various [cannot read] types affect each other?
- The whole process seems based on science and conservations – not the common man approach. There is fear that the science will overshadow needs for regular people.
- What is the time frame for fine filter, RMPs or various pieces of land?
 - discussion about levels of land management
- Is there any way to weigh use (hiking, birding, OHV, etc)?
 - some surveys, then long discussion with Gary Briere about coarse versus fine filter analysis
- Three zones – Reserves, no new OHV. Woodlands, no new OHV. Parklands, maybe? Can that be definite?
 - Some believe that Parklands are the place for managing that kind of recreation. Would be subject to coarse/fine filter analysis. Chapter 202 of 2010 Legislation concerning OHV registration – a portion is required to be used for building trails or purchasing land; should help with that.
- F. Gilbert Hills State Forest (Foxboro/Wrentham) designation needs to be reconsidered – it needs to be considered as Parklands; to be consistent with Wrentham and _____[left blank]. Also, F. Gilbert Hills is an important link in Warner Trails Systems.
- Myles Standish – it is so huge it ought to be designated as Parklands to support an OHV trail network.

- Rebut by participant: It is the third largest pine [cannot read] in the world – that makes it a poor choice for OHV use and best choice as Reserve.
- Better signage in an important part of management – OHV riders/equestrians, etc need to be able to know better about where/what to use. We want our 3 miles of trails back that was taken as a result of creating a new on/off ramp on Rt24 on parking lot side of forest.

Group #2

Facilitator/Recorder: Bill Logue

DCR staff/Recorder: Bob O'Connor

- How much impact did the staff at each site have in the decision making process about designations? What role did the ecological landscape units (ELU) play in use decisions? (Context of question/comment was OHV use.)
 - ELUs look at land type and overlay the entire state, they was no qualitative aspect in them concerning use. The models used both internal and external data. Staff expertise was sought out and impacted decisions as did the comments from the fall criteria and guideline public workshops. Where there is OHV use in reserves, that will remain the same until the fine filter is applied.
 - In 2005 the riding community, environmental organizations and others responded to controversy in OHV use and developed criteria concerning slopes, plants, etc. – about 40 criteria in total. A coarse filter was applied to the 9 DCR properties where OHV use was allowed. Eight passed. For those properties DCR is looking to maintain and improve the trail system. Chapter 202 passed in 2010 and at least 25% of registration funds under the chapter 90B program will be used to maintain and improve trails and purchase riding property. All involved in the process recognized that without legal places to ride there will be more illegal riding and that the supply of riding locations is currently inadequate. The fine filter will look at trail fragility and whether some need to be relocated. **[Please see Motorized Trail Recreation Facility Assessment Policy available at http://www.mass.gov/dcr/recreate/ohv_policy.pdf]**
- If trails are shut down there will be more illegal riding, especially people going off their own properties.
 - The state can accommodate riding only in certain areas and “backdoor” riding has been a problem for many.
- How long does the fine filter analysis take and will it limit riding?
 - First it will be done in Reserves.
 - Chapter 202 Acts of 2010 Legislation creates OHV Trust Fund, with at least 25% for development/maintenance of riding needs
 - Coarse filter – looks at appropriateness of whole property for OHVs. Fine filter looks at impacts of each trail
- Will the filter be applied in reserves only? Text seems to indicate this.

- No. The filter is being done as part of the resource management plan (RMP) in Pittsfield State Forest and will be done prior to other RMP's..
- Could Freetown State Forest lose riding?
 - A deeper analysis will be done as part of the site RMP process.
- How soon will the RMP be done for Freetown?
 - The RMP list is on the DCR website and will involve public input. Freetown is not at the top of the list.
- Need to let the public know what is “order” of RMPs
 - RMP at Fall River/Freetown is 25 years-old (Goals). New RMP should be done soon.
- What does Bio Reserve Plan say about activities and forestry? **[It states that active forest management will take place]**
- DCR has closed trails (Myles Standish) after allowing them, so there is concern they will do it again.
- In past, state every five years re-do list of recommendations of what to allow on properties and they never follow through
- Who makes the decision about how the 25% of Trust fund funding will be spent?
 - The legislation specifies the membership of a committee which includes the OHV community, and this committee will give the State input on how to spend these funds. The 25% minimum is for trail development, maintenance and purchase. The remaining funds may be used for education, safety training, enforcement, etc.
- What is minimum mileage for coarse filter for trails? Was 25 miles.
- Limited policing at Freetown Fall River – dirt bikes help keep forest safe and help clean up the woods. If decrease dirt biking, then increase police.
- Each EPO covers 17 towns; too slow response
- Freetown Fall River is only place to ride dirt bikes
- How important is the number of people who came to meetings? **[All forms of public input are important and will be considered. However, it is not a “voting” process, so the number of people at a particular meeting in and of itself will not influence the outcome]**
- Post information at trail access sites about status of process
- Haven't heard about MOA about trail clean up.
- Concern about re-routing of closed trails on to private property. If a private property owner decides not to allow riding, what happens to the trail from the DCR property? Will DCR help reroute through other private property?
 - There are liability laws to protect the landowner.
- Will the public get notice when zoning decisions are made within each property and will maps be available to look at?
 - Yes as part of RMPs. About 5 RMPs are completed each year.

- As an abutting private property owner I like the OHV use. There is limited policing. The dirt bikers create activity and awareness for safety, they have notified and warned me of questionable activity or people. If riding stops it will be a safety vacuum.
- Environmental Police have large areas to cover and cannot respond quickly.
 - The riding community takes care of trails and maintains them in a healthy condition and clean them up and has advocated for the DCR budget.
- When the riding community does a cleanup, they cleanup for everyone.

Group #3

Facilitator: Richard Tillberg

Recorder: Mette Kreutzmann

DCR staff: Peter Church

- How were the designations done? What are the criteria used?
 - Modeling – sets of criteria. Forest Management for woodlands. For Parklands, looked at trail density and recreation areas. For Reserves, large blocks of land and priority habitat. Applied this to all properties across state. Some properties ranked high in two categories – here we talked with people to get input, forest managers, etc to make the decisions. **[See Anticipated Question #2]**
- Passion for OHV, so does my family and my kids. We are an endangered species. Whole family rides. Please explain – will trail riding be allowed and where
 - There are 8 properties with OHV use allowed – designations do not affect those. In this process nothing changed. Freetown is draft designated as Woodlands. **[See Anticipated Question #15]**
- When will OHVs open Myles Standish in Parklands?
 - Currently, OHV not allowed and this will not change with a change in designation
- Shouldn't be that way. Many fire roads that could be used. Earlier more trails available then complaints and then in the early 1990s, closed by the state to do survey to determine that OHV not suitable. Some DCR folks have it in for OHV. I help establish trails in Freetown. I have street legal vehicle – refuse to get a sticker.
- He is not allowed to ride on private property without a sticker
- This cannot fly forever. Why need sticker if already legal? It hits home – hurts. An Environment Officer at a safety training said that more miles of trails would come – said it would expand the trail network – is that true?
 - He may have misinterpreted the law. 25% of the fee of registrations is to go to trail maintenance. As money is collected, more can be done. The Department mandate that money go to trails – so not into General Funds. Small batch of money right now – you may begin to see how resources are used.
- On ORV sold over the years 30,000 stickers. Do you know how many with street legal motorcycles? You will find that the number is going to quadruple – we want the funds

because we need more trails.

- Big concerns that trail system in Freetown stay open.
- So the funding from stickers goes into trails. I believe some gas money too? Not sure where those funds go?
 - Recreational Trails Program – perhaps it goes there; otherwise not sure where the money from the gas tax goes
- Would love to see trail system expanded – so few places to ride. We want to stay with legal trails.
- Freetown stays the same. Concern about coarse filter application – state put that in place before this – feels like we are set up to fail. Want more trail mileage. Concern regarding management of trails. We can help maintain trails as volunteers.
 - Woodlands allow OHV; Parklands perhaps; Reserves no as is.
- What are distance requirements for fine filter system? **[Please see Motorized Trail Recreation Facility Assessment Policy available at http://www.mass.gov/dcr/recreate/ohv_policy.pdf]**
- Bike trails, yes – no ranges – win win – small park Massasoik Park – blow downs everywhere – we can open up the trails
 - Park that had limited staffing, so closed – just sitting there. People use it. Gates closed. East Taunton. Several 100 acres perhaps.
- Wrentham, F. Gilbert Hills and Franklin – not Reserves?
 - No, not Reserves.
- Look at the number of stickers in that program to see how many people are really out there.
- How can two parks next to each other have different designations? I'm thinking about Wrentham and F. Gilbert Hills?
 - We applied the [at least] 60/40 target and used ELUs as modeling – one has more trail density.
- Harvest only in Woodlands?
 - Up to 30 acres with application. Harvesting is highly regulated. Criteria to meet re cutting. Commercial cutting in Woodlands only, but we have flexibility if it interferes with public safety. **[See Anticipated Questions # 9 & 10]**
- Regarding forest management – are we going to reforest in Freetown? We need to replant after cutting.
 - That is part of the beauty of New England forests – it'll regenerate [well if good silviculture is followed when conducting harvests].
- Lots of cleat cutting in the last 5-6 years, but we don't see anything coming back – poor management. Part of home wood cutting. Forest management done poorly. Areas cut, no regard for trail system. Empty buckets of fuel left behind and other trash.
- Forest clean up on Earth Day – we fill up dumpsters! Freetown is a dumping ground. There is oil in plastic containers – I told the rangers. I didn't want to touch it – scared someone

might think it was me.

- Place looks like a mess – people don't feel they need to respect the place and clean up mess.
- Management of our forests not done well. Money goes elsewhere.
 - Timber sale harvesting not done lately in many areas, so less money come in as resources.
- Where cutting done here – poorly done in the past
 - Forests managers are responsible for this so let us know.
 - Dirt bikes – I was told that the trail system is going to expand – is that true?
 - Chapter 202 of the 2010 Act – all money from ATV, snowmobiles, etc goes into trail maintenance, etc. The rider community is investing in itself. 25% of the funds go in trails management.
- There is a lot of chatter online – it's been said that any new trails require four wheel quad – is that true?
 - 70% of community ride quads. Pittsfield area mostly. You [dirt biker community] are better organized than any other ATV group.
- ORV meeting – do research regarding the new OHV stickers – we have street legal bikes – you will find that money will increase – so look at what you are offering us.
 - Good point.
- Street legal bikes did not use to fall under new law in the past.
- 90B – don't think it is right. We don't want to be fined.
 - Your contribution is very important.
- Between Woodlands and Parklands, which filter will be applied?
 - Coarse filter looks at the entire property. All analyzed in 2007. Now, we are looking at fine filter criteria especially around three properties. Portions of Tolland, Beartown and October Mountain where the fine filter will be applied. **[Please see Motorized Trail Recreation Facility Assessment Policy available at http://www.mass.gov/dcr/recreate/ohv_policy.pdf]**

Comments, Suggestions, and Questions Submitted

Dighton June 7, 2011

Suggestions:

- Posting of meeting schedule/information at Freetown Forest so more riders are aware of these DCR meetings, etc
- Better trail labeling. As we see less ORV access, higher traffic creates the need for proper

labeling. Oftentimes ORV users are where they don't belong because of poor trail labeling. This gives them a bad name and creates safety concerns.

- Designate F. Gilbert Hills as a Parkland to coincide with the Wrentham and Franklin state parks' designation of Parklands. F. Gilbert Hills is more suited to handle all user groups and has the resources (bathrooms, forest HQ, fire reserve personnel, camping)
- I feel that the F. Gilbert Hills State Forest should be Parklands, not Woodlands. Franklin and Wrentham state forests would be more suited for Woodlands. They are now parklands.

Comments:

- Allow the Home Fuel-wood Program on properties labeled as Parks, especially for low income citizens
- Please keep Freetown state forest open to ORV usage. More trails should be cut to replace the portion closed off due to new Rt24 off-ramp. Increased trail mileage will reduce erosion. Fewer bikes for trail will allow the trail to heal itself
- How can a property named Southeast MA Bio Reserves not be a Reserve? Why is it designated Woodland? Zone relative mapping? Designated landscaping maps for local parks? Process seems to help, but OHV issues overshadow all other discussions. **[Please see http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/habitat/maps/wma/southeastwma/se_bioreserve.pdf]**
- I would like to see Foxboro state forest as a Woodlands or Parklands.

Information Request:

- I am interested in learning about the mechanism or process whereby DCR has historically reached out to vested local interest or user groups for volunteerism and help in maintenance and repair of DCR properties. Specifically, I'd like to know who in DCR has this responsibility and what has been requested of user groups in the past. I'd also like to learn of the process whereby an individual or user group can volunteer or assist in maintenance of DCR properties.

**DCR Forest Futures Implementation Spring Meetings
Landscape Designation Process
Meeting #7
Leominster, MA
June 13, 2011**

Small Group Notes

Note: These notes were prepared by the Massachusetts Office of Public Collaboration, who facilitated these meetings. Comments made by DCR staff at the meetings are indented. DCR added information shown in brackets after the meetings to address questions and provide context. All other comments were from public participants.

Group #1

Facilitator: Bill Logue

Recorder: Courtney Breese

DCR staff: Tim Zelazo

- Question about the process – I noticed the primary focus of it is parkland by volume, population density, and reserves by biological characteristics, and if a property doesn't fit into either, you just make it a woodland?
 - DCR modeled each property for all three – examined best fit for the three scenarios, and not all fit neatly into one, or they fit into multiples.
- Parkland designation is clear – but how do you distinguish between reserve and woodland?
 - DCR used BioMap 2 to identify characteristics best for reserves. BioMap 2 identifies where the highest biological values are across the state – and identified where state land fit most. Characteristics for reserves included fewer trails, roads, higher biological diversity, endangered species. For woodlands, characteristics included pest management, harvest for timber, lack of forest diversity – where forestry would be desirable for management.
- Is this different from the Natural Heritage Program?
 - This was part of BioMap 2 also – focused on habitat.
- So if you have a large forest and only two big trails, it wouldn't register as a parkland.
 - It would likely not. Some areas in woodlands and reserves are designated parklands where there is heavy use within.
- Will the designation of woodland/parkland impact use?
 - No, there will still be access in these designations.
- Will access in woodlands/parklands be limited to existing trails?
 - In reserves DCR will be more strategic with new trails, but trail plans will be important to that. Resource Management Plans (RMPs) will be done for particular sites, and

will be the point where we get into whether to add more trails, close trails, etc. Pittsfield State Forest has its RMP process underway now (designated woodland).

- Designated land – 10 years from now a T station could be put in next to it, the town wants to put in a bike path – will the town need to go to the legislature to change the designation to allow for that?
 - DCR will be reviewing these designations. But, if looking to change the use of the land there may be some legislation to follow in doing that.
- You are changing the designations, but not the use other than logging?
 - DCR will be managing less land for forestry going forward. For property designation, reserves with off-highway vehicle use (OHV), we will be looking at a fine-filter analysis of these properties which may or may not result in changes to trails. This only applies to OHV – not to snowmobiles.
- Documents (Management Guidelines) don't mention snowmobiles, just OHV. You need to add clarification/mention of no change to snowmobiles, that they are considered differently from OHV.
- What about logging in winter?
 - **[At certain harvests, logging may be limited to frozen conditions where soil conditions or other sensitive resources require this. Other harvests may have different seasonal limitations due to certain species nesting requirements. Harvests are generally suspended during the wet spring season.]**
- But this is not the case in other properties.
- Do these designations include watersheds?
 - No. **[See Anticipated Question #14]**
- Can we get the results of the designations to look at for specific properties?
 - We will be putting these up online, probably in the next couple days. **[Please see <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/ld/landscapedesignations.htm>]**
- Are tiny properties (town state forests) included?
 - Yes, almost 400,000 acres in total. Exceptions are where properties are jointly managed by DCR and Dept. of Fish and Game.
- Is this a direct result of negative feedback from logging?
 - That was the impetus for this process. The Technical Steering Committee (TSC) said that DCR needs to look statewide and articulate the uses for specific properties.
- So will you be using best practices vs. clear cutting? **[See Anticipated Question #9]**
- Will there be access to trails during logging?
 - Access will depend on the trail system, but there will also be signage etc. while a harvest is going on.
- How about a cross-country trail on property used by trucks?
 - DCR would have to work with the community where the trail is designated for that use and work together, work around that use. There will be that interface at times.

When DCR plans a timber sale, we will do a site visit that is open to the public, will allow for a chance to discuss issues so that they can be worked around, addressed. Winter is a good time to log, but we will elicit input and send out emails, etc. to notify.

- The town of Princeton – biggest need is recreation trails. Loggers, while a temporary inconvenience, many times create trails and roads, and are seen as an ally and benefit. We should work as a team.
- Yes, but I have seen poor practices before. If best management, we should welcome it.
 - Generally trails are buffered from harvesting with long distance trails requiring wider buffers..
- Is there a way to add general rules for logging operations? For example, leave trail areas unplowed, etc.?
 - Sure. DCR can look into adding language to timber sale contracts.
- It is hard for the public to follow all contracts – it would be better if language was included in all.
 - There is an issue with legal trails – we can't protect all "trails."
- In addition to general site visit, look at site-by-site, should have general guidelines.
- Watatic is 234 acres with other abutting properties – DCR is a minority owner of it. This was a 4 year project to preserve it as state land (done by private committee). Private donations paid for it, and we did not do it to turn it into logging land. It is going to be hard to go look for money to protect it if people see that the state has designated it as a woodland. Six owners of the property – DCR, Fisheries & Wildlife, Towns of Ashby and Ashburnham, Ashby Land Trust and Ashburnham Conservation Trust. Watatic Management Community was not included in this.
 - The management plan includes some forest management.
- Yes, but in the notes for the plan there is feedback that was not responded to. Funders gave money with the understanding that there would be no commercial harvesting – just management as needed.
 - Woodlands gives us the ability to manage forests – it does not necessarily mean it is open to commercial harvesting.
- DCR by designating woodland does not mean it will just start cutting – issue with the comparison of all, and how the designation is perceived.
- The beginning of the process was a response to "chain saw massacre" and the amount of land slated for cutting in the state. Doesn't seem like DCR came to all committees, etc.
- But one group of owners can't decide unilaterally.
- Does DCR plan to open/expand OHV/snowmobile use?
 - This will be determined via individual property plans.
- What is the process of the advisory committee in reviewing trails, etc.?
 - The committee will be looking at natural resources conservation, not recreation.
- If we want to revise or develop new trails, will we need to jump through a bunch of red tape?

- During the resource management planning process there will be consideration for new trails. If you are looking to re-route a trail, that would be separate.
- In the 1980's there were plans written up for specific properties – were these taken into consideration?
 - Not specifically, but we are aware of them and will draw from them in the resource management plan process.
- I have a complaint about the Visioning Process. I attended a meeting at Wachusett Community College – the Secretary had already announced what he had decided to do. Discouraged town members turned away. I hope this input is really being considered, and that this is not just being done in a back room.
- Is it possible to modify woodland designation – I'm concerned that if not identified as biologically significant, and not identified as a park, it is dropped into woodland and open for logging.
 - If you look at strict parkland zone or reserve there is no commercial harvesting. But, there are exceptions for that. That is the clear distinction with woodlands.
- But our planning previously only discussed cutting for issues such as tornadoes. Even protecting land within woodland designation wouldn't be enough for our town.
 - Silviculture level 1 designates areas not to log. Not sure if it would fit Watatic.
- I live in Ashby, I think Watatic is special, recommend DCR does not designate it as a woodland.
- The biggest need is for more trails in Princeton for all uses (though there have been some issues with OHV).

Group #2

Facilitator: Matt Thompson

Recorder: Mette Kreutzmann

DCR staff: Tim Rayworth

- How much influence did the public have in draft designations around Watatic. Many people were not part of the process
 - There is a management plan in place for the Watatic. Models were used to identify the properties, and then people input were sought.
- No consensus was reached on the management plan. Things were added to the plan that weren't discussed. Dealing with snowmobiles at the time of the FFVP, so less attention was paid to this. Area designated as Parklands – the criteria for this especially around the trails seem arbitrary.
 - The criteria for Parklands were intensity of use, density of trails. The TSC recommended the criteria.
- Cedar Swamp in Westboro. Here the DCR is a minority stakeholder. No majority

stakeholders were contacted. The Reserves designation is the right designation, but not part of the process.

- Part of the MA Audubon. Overall support of process and of where DCR is heading. Pleased with the expansion of parklands and reserves. The lands belong to the public. DCR is the most important land owner. But I have a concern as there are budget cuts to personnel – the lines of communication could be better – as resources are less, local organizations could help. Also, a more site specific level plan is needed for the Wachusett Mountain – it is a special place because of the red oak forest – the RMP in place should be honored – old growth and 1000 acres buffer around the summit, but there is skiing right next to it.
- I'm part of the Appalachian Mountain Club. What is the purpose of the public meetings? Is it to collect input so that when site specific plans are done, the input is taken into account?
 - These meetings are intended to bring out all these issues that you are bringing to our attention. Also, there is a site plan for Wachusett Mountain – the red oak is protected – there is a process in place for that. There were concerns around this area – reserve or parkland – struggle because of overlapping areas – we recognize this – tried to make the best choice of future use because of the complexity of the site.
- Will the designations be used to set policies for future acquisitions of properties? Is there an effort to maintain the 60/40 ratio?
 - **[DCR rates potential acquisition projects on resource quality, strategic location, protection of or addition to existing properties, threat from development, etc. After properties have been acquired they will be evaluated as to the most appropriate designation.]**
- As new lands are acquired – DCR should evaluate its designation beforehand.
 - Yes, **[but the main purpose in acquisitions is protection of resources of statewide importance from conversion to developed uses.]**
- Will funds be aimed at changing the ratio, e.g. purchasing woodlands?
- **[Acquisitions are done to protect resources (see above) with decisions as to management as parks, woodlands or reserves done after the land is protected.]**
- How is FRSAC selected? Ought to be selected via nomination by a broad range of groups invited by the Commissioner and the Secretary, e.g. Forestry, Friends groups, OHV, conservation organizations. **[The FRSAC will be composed of people with the best experience and expertise in the areas where the committee will advise DCR, and selection will be based on those qualifications]**
- There are 8 acres of land in Westborough – swamp - according to our data – not sure if whether it is part of DWSP or DSPR.
 - **[Land in this general area was recently transferred from the DWSP to the DSPR so this should fall under one of the three designations.]**
- Concerned about institutional memory as DCR staff changes. Need a process so no change depending on who is with DCR.
- For future forest management of designated woodland – DCR is understaffed. Should consider privatizing the management of woodlands – hire green FSC Certified Foresters to manage certain units. Lots of properties get neglected because of lack of staffing.

- What is in an RMP? How is it interpreted? There are conflicting recommendations in the Watatic RMP. The area has steep slopes and priority habitat and this is an area suggested for forestry. **[Areas within each designation need to have easy to follow boundaries so not all steep slopes are excluded from woodlands for example. However, the “level 1” management within woodlands will have limited management and steep slopes will fall into these areas.]**
- This is a great process. It needs a legal framework or it may disappear under the next or another Administration. Strongly suggest that this process gets incorporated into existing law – so there is a legal underpinning to protect the plans and the process.
- Where priority habitat exists on public lands, DCR needs to do more than minimize adverse impacts. Must be managed for the benefit of those habitats. The process in place does not help enough; not sufficient.
- The FFVP was done in reaction to public outcry because of cutting – specifically over two major trails in Watatic.
- If the designation is woodlands, does that mean you will cut? Automatic cutting?
 - No, it does not mean automatic cutting.
- Is there room in this process for changes to the designations?
 - That is why we are here. Give us compelling arguments for where you think there should be changes and why. **[See Anticipated Question #4 for elaboration]**
- Good forestry can be compatible with good trail systems, if you set buffers etc.
 - Look in the Management guidelines, the active forestry guidelines. The levels of procedures are based on site analysis. Levels 1, 2, 3, each require different needs to restore.

Group #3

Facilitator/Recorder: Loraine Della Porta

EEA/DCR staff: Bob O’Connor and Stephanie Cooper

- Question about Townsend State Forest – will there be OHV trails
 - DCR has developed a policy on OHV use – a way of analyzing whether OHV use is appropriate on a particular property – it’s called a “fine filter” analysis. It allows us to determine whether OHV use is still appropriate in areas where it has been traditionally allowed.
- There are currently only 2 areas where ATV’s are allowed but ATV use continues to grow. How can DCR expect not to have over-use of those areas?
 - The new OHV laws establish fees for registration which are then used to establish and maintain trails. Those fees are reinvested into OHV use.
- There are currently no places in MA that allow for OHVs over 1000 lbs. I pay the \$40 fee but have no access to trails. I am not given anything for my money.
- When people are contained to one or two areas, this spreads the illegal use of OHVs. Most people recreate legally but not everyone behaves that way. Why are we charged fees and

no one else is?

- There are also parking fees charged at day use areas.
- With regard to the maps, if you had other protected lands shown – it would be helpful. The map should be filled out so that we can see other protected lands in the state and on the borders of other states.
- We'll make those available online soon.
- If there are priority habitats, they should be shown along with all abutting conservation land to show context for designations.
 - We will make those available along with the modeling results. They will be on the DCR website.
- Why are we not considering WMA lands?
 - They are managed by our sister agency Fish & Wildlife. **[See Anticipated Question #14]**
- If there is an Asian Longhorned Beetle infestation in an area that is scheduled for harvest, what happens? Is there anyone who will be monitoring that? **[All three designations have policies with regard to serious invasive problems such as Asian Longhorned Beetle and these will be followed when necessary.]**
- For example the recent tornado in Brimfield, what happens if there is an existing contract to harvest that area and it is wiped out? **[The specific situation at Brimfield is being evaluated given that its draft designation was reserve. Clean up has already occurred in the recreation sites. Further clean up will be done at a minimum to reduce forest fire risk to surrounding properties.]**
- Fire protection needs to be more specific. Many people use “public safety” and “emergency management” words interchangeably and they shouldn't.
- People do not want to look at windmills- jeep users do not want pretty scenery – looking for desolate areas with trash so they can clean them up and ride.
- Volunteer policy – no driving – but let them cut a cord.
- Too much paperwork for volunteers to volunteer – DCR says they want feedback. There are about 28 4 wheel-drive clubs with each having 40-100 members. Would like to hear more about land acquisition priorities – how they are impacted by the 3 designations.
 - **[Land acquisitions will continue to focus on protecting resources of statewide significance that fit strategically into the present and future forest and park system. Protection of these important parcels from the threat of development will continue to be the priority for acquisitions. Decisions on the designation will be made after the land has been protected.]**
- Small towns can get a lot from 8% timber income – can be \$20 - \$30,000.00 – losing money in Warwick where there will be more reserves.
- Has DCR considered selling carbon credits to make up for that?
 - We have looked at the viability of the carbon market. DCR is open to that.
- In doing designations – did you take hunting into account in woodlands?

- Yes, that was considered along with other recreational uses.
- Cell towers and wind farm sites – aren't we endorsing these and allowing an end-run around town zoning?
 - No. To be clear - this process is in no way attempting to "end run" anything or to violate easements. We are not looking to site large towers on state property. We have tried to be clear about our intent. Suggest reading revised guidelines.
- OHV's love utility easements – erosion is already there and we love riding on rocks.
- 2007 recreation plan recommendations increasing volunteerism. How do we get on those boards?
 - Contact DCR and let them know you are interested in volunteering to serve.
- Ashby did not consult co-owners of property – surprised that it is a woodland has R&E, living waters, not ever been managed.
 - Surprised to hear this. DCR did consult with co-owners.
- Mt. Watatic should be a park. It has birding, hiking, etc. North Central MA already has a lot of woodlands.
- Is prescribed fire allowed outside of SE MA?
 - It may be allowed in other places as appropriate. See Page 14 of the guidelines.
- Were ACEC considered for Squanannasit?
 - We looked at it because many of the same criteria are used in the reserve designation model as are important in ACEC consideration.
- How were changes in the Endangered Species Act considered?
 - **[DCR will always comply with the endangered species act and regulations and reviews projects (whether harvests or facility projects) with NHESP.]**
- The Forest Management section is good. We want low impact equipment but it is expensive. Good harvesters need to have a steady stream of work so they can invest in equipment – income needs to be predictable. This is happening all over the country.
- Give people incentives to do good work and to make good choices.
- I do not understand the Article 97 land conversion. Are all 3 designations equally protected by Article 97? **[Yes – all government owned land dedicated to conservation, open space, agriculture, parks, forestry etc. is protected by Article 97 of the Commonwealth's constitution.]**
- Are the designations going to affect PILOT payments? **[No, Payment in Lieu of Taxes are based on assessments of values by the Department of Revenue and the three designations will not affect that process.]**
- Townsend wants more revenue.
- RMPs largely ignored by 2 administrations – zoning usurps RMPS – should do the RMPs first.
 - Landscape designations are at the 100,000 foot view – and the RMP is on the ground and looks at particular characteristics and allows us to be specific.

- Just want to say I feel really good about the progress that has been made in this whole process. It is very impressive and I appreciate DCR's efforts to do this.

Comments, Questions, and Suggestions Submitted

Leominster June 13, 2011

Comments:

- What criteria were used to designate Mt. Watatic Reservation as a woodland for harvesting when the priority natural resources map from the resource management plan done by DCR shows it as over 75% NHESP living waters critical supporting watershed and biomap supporting natural landscape? With a wildlife sanctuary and WMA abutting, and has not historically been managed. **[The three models were used to designate this property. Within the woodland designation there are 3 levels of management with the more sensitive resource areas put into "level 1" areas where harvesting is very limited.]**
- Parkland designation criteria seem arbitrary. How does intensity of housing make an area more suitable for park vs. woodland? Number of trails and amount of use? Seems like Watatic Reservation is being so heavily used that it is being harmed – but because housing density is low, designate a woodland. Poor choice. **[Beyond the three models, DCR staff from all the regions had input into these draft designations. This public input process is meant to obtain more information such as you are providing.]**
- Your own recommendations for the Watatic Reservation recommended against logging for the following reasons: 1. Promise made in received grant from Sweet Water Trust. 2. Steep slopes unsuitable for logging. 3. Educational opportunity for sugar bush. 4. Proximity/high use of trails – Wapack and Mid State Trails. 5. High priority habitat and bio-map area.
- As representative of Town of Ashby on the Watatic Reservation Management Committee I wonder why none of the owner representatives were made aware of this decision process while it was evolving the recommendations? **[The current process is meant to hear from anyone with important input such as this.]** No one was aware that this was what was inserted into the management plan. There was no concerns for designation the Watatic Reservation as a woodland. We didn't raise \$1 million to have you cut it down!
- Overall, I support the designations, especially having at least 60% of the land in Reserves/Parklands. DCR is the most important landowner for biodiversity in the state. There values must be protected. Existing RPMs, e.g. Wachusett Mtn, biodiversity zone around the summit must be respected. On ALL properties, no major changes should happen on the ground until an RMP is in place.
- Brimfield Reserve – excellent opportunity for scientific study. How much early successional habitat was created by the tornadoes? Other than removals that will be necessary to provide safe access, clean up the park areas and provide fire roads access, leave this natural disturbance and study it; compare to managed woodlands.
- I live in Lancaster – agree with woodland designation – makes sense. Thank you for this prodigious amount of work

Suggestions:

- Recommend acquisition/partnership with Holliston, Hopkinton and Milford to acquire/protect over 1,000 acres of forestland in the three towns. Some is protected by town owned land other is privately owned. Great trails location. Study was done by Upper Charles Conservation Land Trust, called Upper Charles Headwaters.
- DCR should consider hiring private licensed consulting foresters, who also should be FSC-certified, to manage some designated woodlands. DCR would retain tight oversight of proposed management and cutting plans, and review of harvesting operations. By doing so, DCR would expand its forest management capacity, which would result in a better-managed state woodlands system, which currently is handicapped by a lack of sufficient DCR field staff.
- The landscape designations must be included in some existing legislative framework or it all could go the way of the Watershed Initiative – gone with a change in leadership of EEA or DCR. Bring this process under the Land Stewardship Zoning Guidelines or other laws. We don't want everyone's hard work to disappear. EEA should initiate actions to achieve legal protection NOW and not wait till the fall.
- The public reacts to incentive – it might be helpful to consider/explain HOW this plan will affect/benefit those who use it (social, economic, environmentally, etc). Go into detail about the technical aspects of the landscape designations – characteristics of each, etc. How were these designations reached? Explain the process.
- Better ways to run a hearing to make people feel like they will have an opportunity to be heard. Less gimmicks, more meat!

Information Request/Questions:

- 4x4 users groups are growing exponentially. There are thirty 4x4 clubs in the northeast in one of the associations. We have about 2,000 individuals.
- I'm president of two 4x4 non-profit clubs, V4WDA Voluntary Trail Patrol, Northeast Assoc. of 4 Wheel Drive Clubs and more. I am interested in participation in 4x4 and OHRV advisory with DCR, as well as MA Environmental Police. Also interested in MARTAB. Our community has a lot to offer and will work for access.
- I would like to be involved directly as a representative of the +1000lb OHV group on further discussions. etc. I am currently a member of several clubs included in the New England Association of 4-wheel drive clubs. I have attended a couple of the FFVP meetings and would like to be more involved. Thank you.