

# Excerpted from *Wachusett Reservoir Watershed 2023 Public Access Plan Update*

## **B. General Access Conditions**

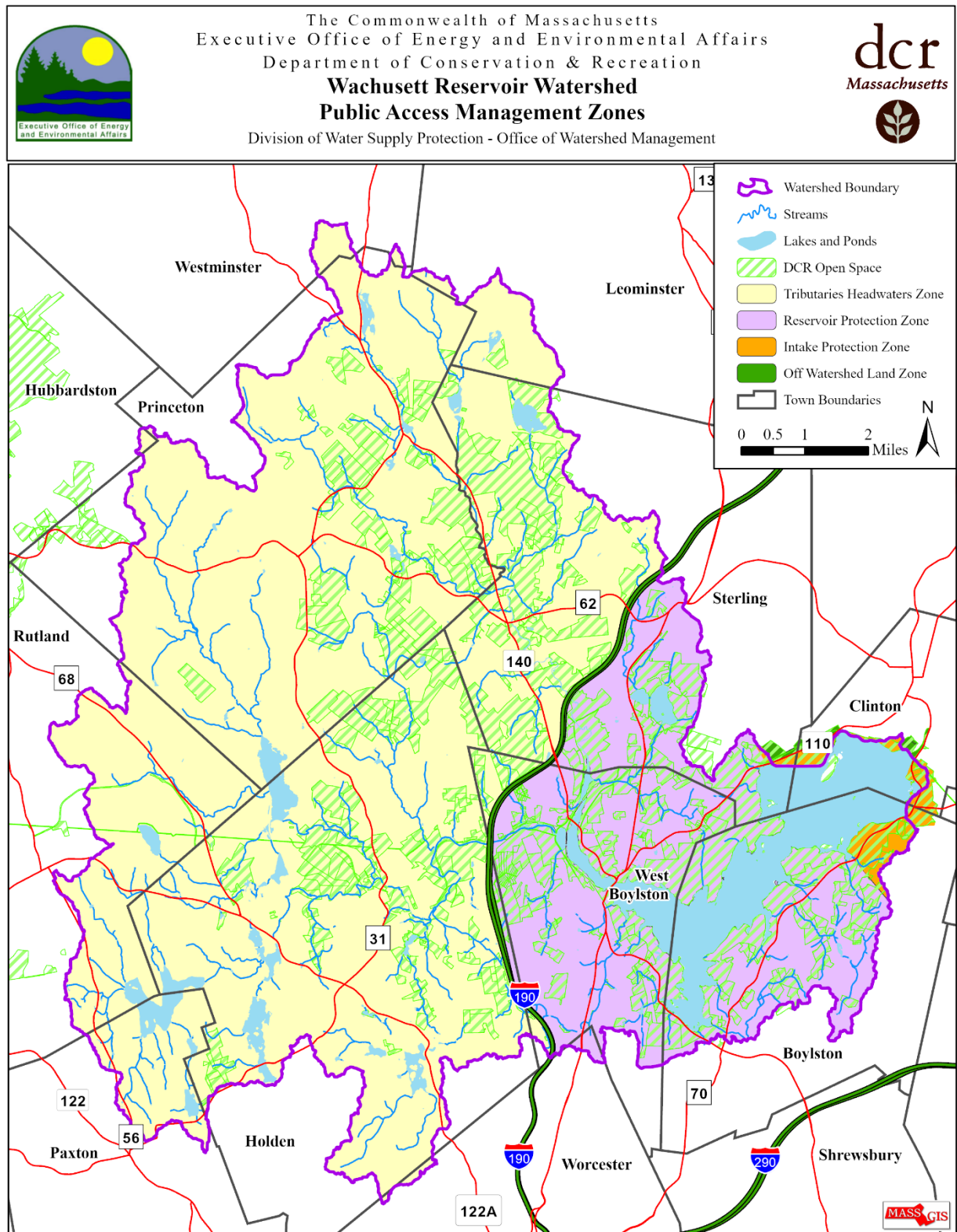
DWSP has general conditions under which allowed activities must be conducted. These conditions are detailed below and summarized along with specific access conditions in Tables 4-6. DWSP may close its properties to public access during weather, emergency, security, or other operational situations.

### **General Conditions**

- It is the responsibility of the visitor to know and abide by the applicable rules, regulations, and conditions for access.
- General public access within DWSP lands in the Wachusett Reservoir watershed is restricted to one hour before sunrise to one hour after sunset through gates or designated (posted) areas only, unless authorized by a permit from DWSP or its designee.
- Any activity which injures or defaces the property of the Commonwealth is strictly prohibited.
- Feeding wildlife is prohibited.
- Visitors are advised that active forestry harvest operations may be in progress on DWSP properties. Please avoid visiting such areas, entering harvest areas, or coming within three hundred feet of equipment.
- Visitors are asked to respect the rights of owners of adjacent property and not trespass on private lands.
- Because of the importance of protecting water quality, visitors are prohibited from depositing human waste on watershed lands by planning accordingly.
- Visitors are required to not wash objects in any watercourse.
- Visitors are asked to limit outdoor smoking activities to help prevent wildfires and carry out any refuse. No fires are allowed on DWSP properties.
- Please report any suspicious or dangerous activity on lands or waters by calling the MA State Police at 508-829-8410 or the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) 24-hour communications center at 508-820-1428
- For general questions on public access or passive recreation activities, please contact the Wachusett/Sudbury Watershed Ranger office at 978-365-3800.



**Map 3. Wachusett Reservoir Watershed Public Access Management Areas**



## Map 5. Public Access Management – Reservoir Protection Zone

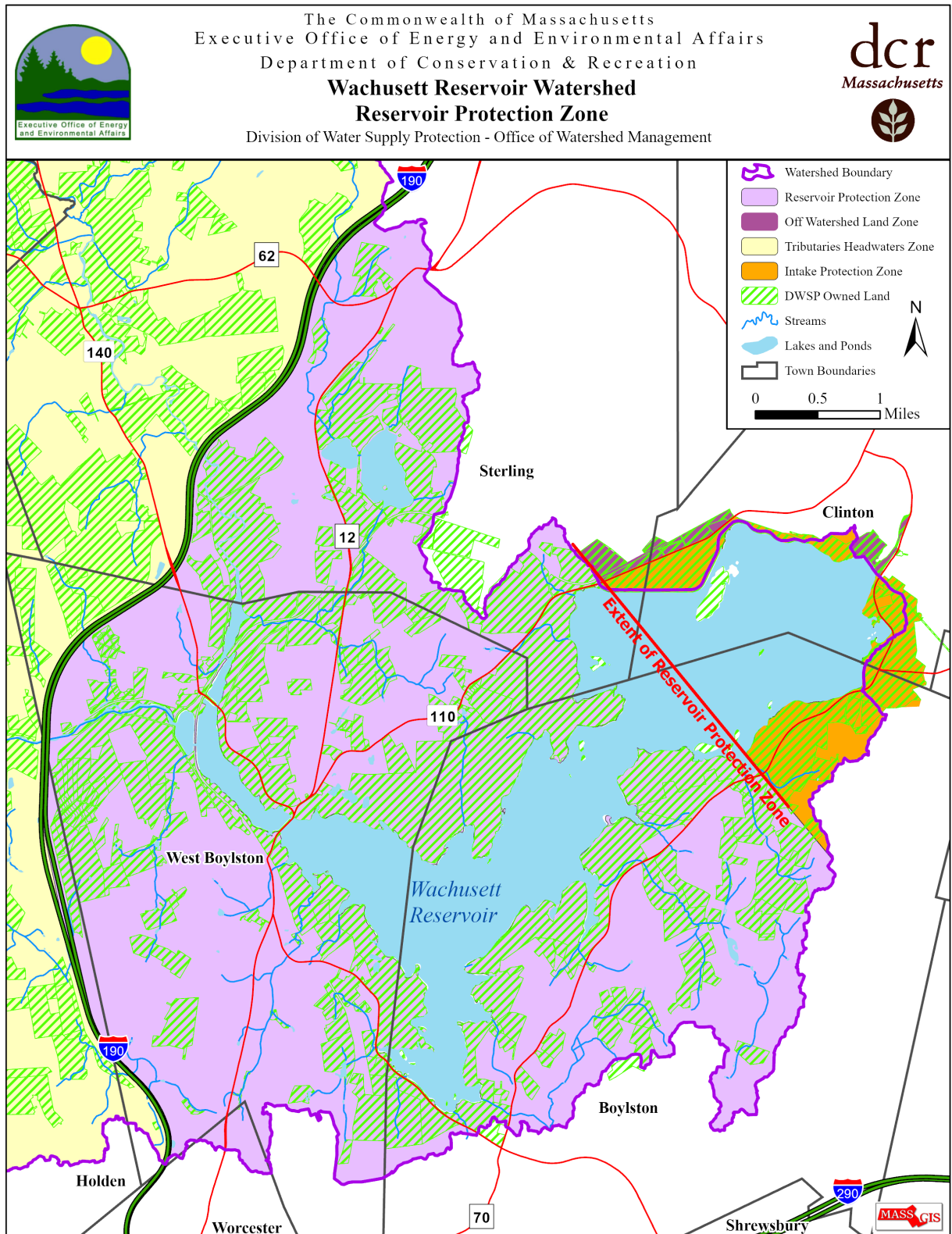


Table 4. Public Access Policies - 2023

Activity	Intake Protection Zone	Reservoir Protection Zone	Tributary Protection Zone	Off Watershed Land Zone
<b>VEHICLE ACCESS</b>				
Snowmobiling	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Off-Highway Vehicles Riding (OHV)	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Bicycling/E-bikes -Designated roads	⊘	⊘	☐ <sup>1</sup>	☐ <sup>2</sup>
Off-road Bicycling	⊘	⊘	⊘ <sup>3</sup>	⊘
Sledding	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
<b>FOOT ACCESS</b>				
Walking/Hiking/Snowshoeing	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cross-country Skiing	☐	☐	☐	☐
Hunting/Trapping	☐ <sup>3</sup>	☐ <sup>3</sup>	☐ <sup>3</sup>	☐ <sup>3</sup>
Ice Fishing/Ice Skating	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Shore Fishing	⊘	☐	☐	☐
<b>WATER ACCESS</b>				
Boat Fishing	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Canoeing/Kayaking/Boating	⊘	⊘	☐ <sup>5</sup>	⊘
Wading (fishing, launching)	⊘	⊘	☐ <sup>6</sup>	⊘
Swimming	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Paddleboarding	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
<b>OTHER ACCESS</b>				
Group Activities (weddings, organized hikes, tour buses, etc.)	☐ <sup>7</sup>	☐ <sup>7</sup>	☐ <sup>7</sup>	☐ <sup>7</sup>
Geocaching and related activities	☐	☐	☐	☐
Wildlife/Bird Watching	☐	☐	☐	☐
Night Access	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Organized Sports	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Dogs/Other Animals	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Horseback Riding	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Collecting/Metal Detecting/Magnet fishing	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Camping	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Fishing Derbies	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Target Shooting	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Advertising	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Marking or Cutting Trails/Roads	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Unmanned Aerial Vehicles/Underwater Drones	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Alcohol Possession or Cannabis Consumption	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Other	Please call the Wachusett Reservoir Field HQ (508) 792-7806 or Watershed Ranger Station (978) 365-3800			

⊘ Prohibited

☐ Allowed - general restrictions

☐<sup>#</sup> Specific Restrictions

### General Restrictions:

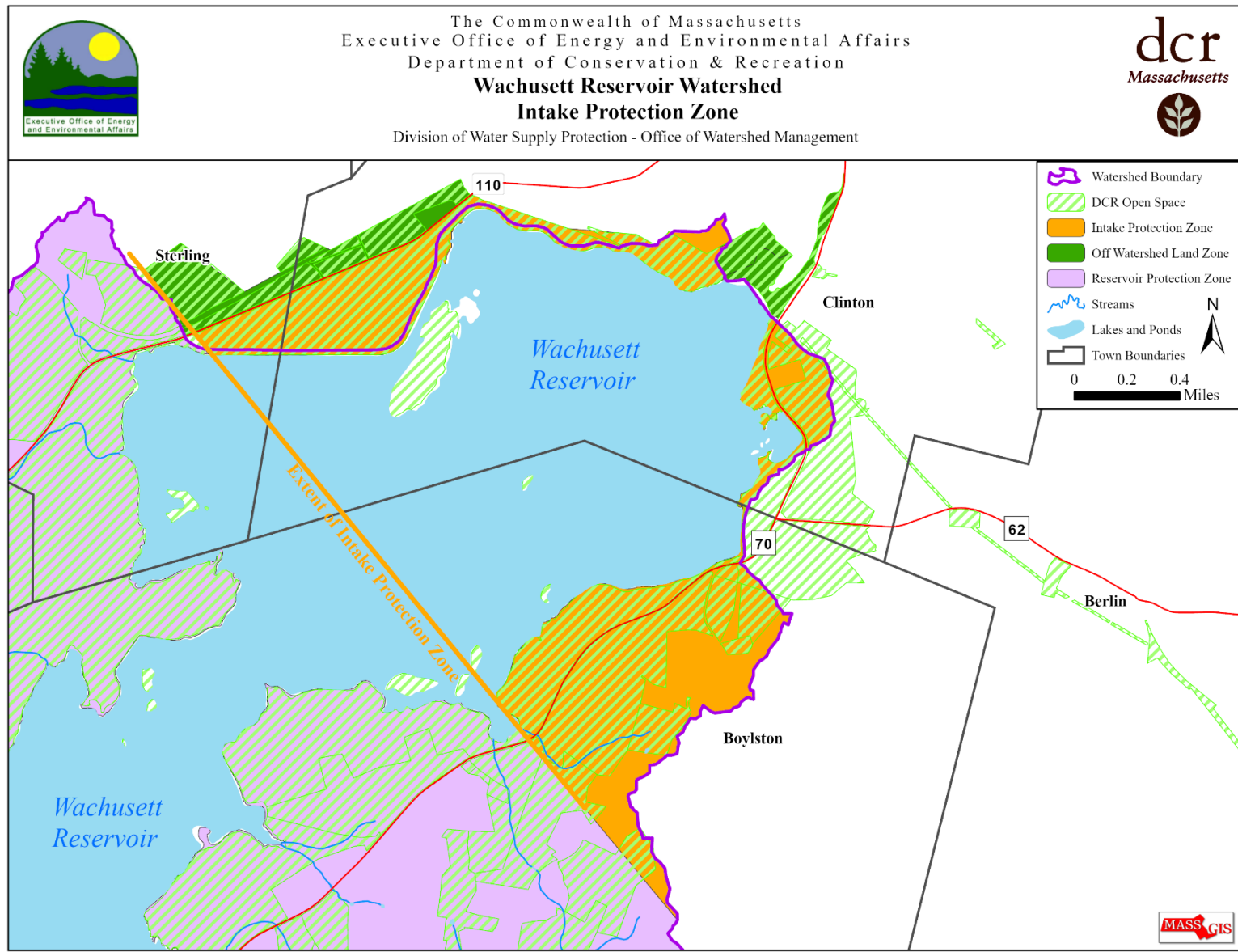
☐ General public access within the Wachusett Reservoir Watershed System is restricted to one hour before sunrise to one hour after sunset through gates or designated (posted) areas only. Any activity which injures or defaces the property of the Commonwealth is strictly prohibited. This chart is based on the Watershed Protection Regulations 313 CMR 11.00. Littering is strictly prohibited. Carry in/Carry out. Do not feed wildlife. No dogs allowed.

### Specific Restrictions:

- <sup>1</sup> Bicycling is allowed on the Mass Central Rail Trail and designated, marked trails only. E-bikes are allowed on the Mass Central Rail Trail only. Bicycles only are allowed along two loop trails in Holden off of the Mass Central Rail Trail.
- <sup>2</sup> Bicycling is allowed from the top of the Spillway to Gate 39 on the lower access road (old rail bed) only. No bicycles are allowed on the top of the North Dike for the entire length. Bicycling and e-bikes allowed on paved road below the dam.
- <sup>3</sup> Bicycles allowed on two loop trails in Holden off of the Mass Central Rail Trail.
- <sup>4</sup> Hunting is allowed in season, with a proper license and a DCR DWSP free hunting permit. See [www.mass.gov/dcr-watershed-hunting](http://www.mass.gov/dcr-watershed-hunting) for up-to-date permit information.
- <sup>5</sup> Canoes, kayaks and non-gas-powered small boats are allowed on West Waushacum Pond, the Quag, and Muddy Pond.
- <sup>6</sup> Wading for fishing or launching a boat/canoe/kayak allowed only on the Quinapoxet River upstream of the accretion dam/MWRA Shaft #1 (at posted signage) and on the Stillwater River upstream of the confluence of Waushacum Brook.
- <sup>7</sup> Groups of up to 25 people are allowed without a permit. Groups of 25 or more are only allowed by permit issued by the Regional Director. Permits for weddings will not be issued.



## Map 4. Public Access Management – Intake Protection Zone



**Table 5. Public Access Policies – 2023**  
**Intake Protection Zone**

Activity	Promenade of the dam along Route 70	Spillway to Gate #36	Route 70 East (Non-reservoir side Route 70)	Route 70 West (Reservoir side Route 70)
<b>VEHICLE ACCESS</b>				
Snowmobiling	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
OHV Riding	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Bicycling/E-bikes - Designated roads	⊘	☐ <sup>1</sup>	⊘	⊘
Off-road Bicycling	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Sledding	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
<b>FOOT ACCESS</b>				
Walking/Hiking/Snowshoeing	☐	☐	☐	⊘
Cross-country Skiing	☐	☐	☐	⊘
Hunting/Trapping	☐ <sup>2</sup>	⊘	☐ <sup>2</sup>	⊘
Ice Fishing/Ice Skating	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Shore Fishing	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
<b>WATER ACCESS</b>				
Boat Fishing	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Canoeing/Kayaking/Boating	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Wading (fishing, launching)	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Swimming	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Paddleboarding	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
<b>OTHER ACCESS</b>				
Group Activities (weddings, organized hikes, tour buses, etc.)	☐ <sup>3</sup>	☐ <sup>3</sup>	☐ <sup>3</sup>	⊘
Geocaching and related activities	☐	☐	☐	⊘
Wildlife/Bird Watching	☐	☐	☐	⊘
Night Access	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Organized Sports	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Dogs/Other Animals	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Horseback Riding	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Collecting/Metal Detecting/Magnet fishing	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Camping	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Fishing Derbies	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Target Shooting	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Advertising	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Marking or Cutting Trails/Roads	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Unmanned Aerial Vehicles/Underwater Drones	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Alcohol Possession or Cannabis Consumption	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Other	Please call the Wachusett Reservoir Field HQ (508) 792-7806 or Watershed Ranger Station (978) 365-3800			

⊘ Prohibited

☐ Allowed - general restrictions

☐<sup>#</sup> Specific Restrictions

### General Restrictions:

- ❑ **General public access within the Wachusett Reservoir Watershed System is restricted to one hour before sunrise to one hour after sunset through gates or designated (posted) areas only. Any activity which injures or defaces the property of the Commonwealth is strictly prohibited. This chart is based on the Watershed Protection Regulations 313 CMR 11.00. Littering is strictly prohibited. Carry in/Carry out. Do not feed wildlife. No dogs allowed.**

### Specific Restrictions:

- <sup>1</sup> Bicycling and e-bikes are allowed from the area below the dam to Gate 39 via the lower access road (old rail bed) only. Bicycling is prohibited on the entire length of the top grassy section of the North Dike.
- <sup>2</sup> Hunting and trapping are allowed with a DCR Permit provided the activities are consistent with MassWildlife seasons and regulations. See [www.mass.gov/dcr-watershed-hunting](http://www.mass.gov/dcr-watershed-hunting) for up-to-date information regarding permits.
- <sup>3</sup> Groups of more than 25 are by a permit issued by the Regional Director only. Permits for weddings over 25 people are not granted.
- <sup>4</sup> Lancaster Mill Pond is open to year-round open water fishing (no ice fishing on DCR portion of water rights).



**Table 6. High Visitor Use Areas Public Access Policies – 2023**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Prom- enade of the Dam</b>	<b>Old Stone Church</b>	<b>Still- water Farm</b>	<b>Pout- water Pond</b>	<b>North Dike (Gates 36-39)</b>	<b>West Waushacum Pond/Quag/ Muddy Pond</b>
<b><i>VEHICLE ACCESS</i></b>						
Snowmobiling	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
OHV Riding	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Bicycling/E-bikes - Designated roads	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Off-road Bicycling	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Sledding	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
<b><i>FOOT ACCESS</i></b>						
Walking/Hiking/ Snowshoeing	□	□	□	□	□	□
Cross-country Skiing	□	□	□	□	□	□
Hunting/Trapping	⊘	□	□	□	□	□
Ice Fishing/Ice Skating	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Shore Fishing	⊘	□	□	□	⊘	□
<b><i>WATER ACCESS</i></b>						
Boat Fishing	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	□
Canoeing/Kayaking/Boating	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	□
Wading (fishing, launching)	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Swimming	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Paddleboarding	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
<b><i>OTHER ACCESS</i></b>						
Group Activities (weddings, organized hikes, tour buses, etc.)	□ <sup>1</sup>	□ <sup>1</sup>	□ <sup>1</sup>	□ <sup>1</sup>	□ <sup>1</sup>	□ <sup>1</sup>
Geocaching and related activities	□	□	□	□	□	□
Wildlife/Bird Watching	□	□	□	□	□	□
Night Access	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Organized Sports	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Dogs/Other Animals	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Horseback Riding	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Collecting/Metal Detecting/ Magnet Fishing	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Camping	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Fishing Derbies	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Target Shooting	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Advertising	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Marking or Cutting Trails/Roads	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Unmanned Aerial Vehicles/ Underwater Drones	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Alcohol Possession or Cannabis Consumption	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘

⊘ Prohibited

□ Allowed - general restrictions

□<sup>#</sup> Specific Restrictions

**General Restrictions:**

- ☐ **General public access within the Wachusett Reservoir Watershed System is restricted to one hour before sunrise to one hour after sunset through gates or designated (posted) areas only. Any activity which injures or defaces the property of the Commonwealth is strictly prohibited. This chart is based on the Watershed Protection Regulations 313 CMR 11.00. Littering is strictly prohibited. Carry in/Carry out. Do not feed wildlife. No dogs allowed.**

**Specific Restrictions:**

- ☐ <sup>1</sup> Groups over 25 are required to have a permit. No permits will be issued for memorial services or weddings.

