

Appendix XVII. Summary of Public Input

I. Issues, Concerns, and Opportunities Input (November 22, 2004 Public Meeting)

On November 22, 2004 a public meeting was held at the DCR Western Regional Office in Pittsfield to solicit input on the Issues, Concerns, and Opportunities for the Berkshire Landscape Assessment and Forest Management Framework. This initial meeting was attended by 56 people. Written remarks addressing the issues, concerns, and opportunities were received by 9 people. Below is an attendance list from this meeting, a summary of the input from both the meeting and those who provided written remarks, along with our responses to them. Additional input was derived from agency personnel on the issues, concerns, and opportunities. The public input above and the information gathered from the agencies were used to develop “Section IX. Issues, Goals, and Recommendations: Issues, Concerns, Opportunities / Goals / Recommendations” in the “Berkshire Landscape Assessment and Forest Management Framework”.

We greatly appreciate the time and attention devoted by all who participated in this public input process. We are confident that we have addressed the input provided and that the input resulted in a much better final version of this document.

A. List of Attendees from Public Meeting on Issues, Concerns, and Opportunities (November 22, 2004):

Bob	Lear	Berkshire Con. District
Jane	Winn	Berkshire Environmental Action Team (BEAT)
Rene'	Laubach	Berkshire Sanctuaries
Tad	Ames	Berkshire Natural Resources Council (BNRC)
Tom	Matuszko	Berkshire Regional Planning Council
Paul	Knauth	Crane & Company
Jim	DiMaio	DCR
Ken	Gooch	DCR
Mike	Fleming	DCR
Kristopher	Massini	DCR
Bob	Mellace	DCR
Joanne	Nunes	DCR
Jim	Rassman	DCR
Dave	Rob	DCR
Brian	Hawthorne	DFG / DFW
John	Scanlon	DFG / DFW
Pat	Swain	DFG / DFW / NHESP
Michael	Chapline	Eastern Ch. 4 Wheel Drive Assoc. (EC4WDA)
Bruce	Conroy, Jr.	EC4WDA, Reg. D
Aili	McKeen	EC4WDA, Reg. D
Nick	Thielker	Friends of Mt. Everett
Gregory	Cox	Massachusetts Forestry Association
Bernie	Bergeron	Massachusetts Wood Producers Association
John	Bartley	NETRA
Steve	Nordby	Northeast Association of 4WD Clubs
Paul	Karczmarczyk	Ruffed Grouse Society
Tim	Abbott	The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
Andy	Finton	TNC
Jess	Murray	TNC

Kay	Sadighi	TNC
Bill	Toomey	TNC
Shane	Bajnoci	W.D. Cows, Inc.
Odin	Adolphson	Pittsfield, MA
Steve	AsPinall	Pittsfield, MA
Tom	Brule	Drury, MA
Anita	CaPeLess	Pittsfield, MA
Matt	Cartier	Pittsfield, MA
Gene	Chague	Lenox, MA
Craig	Drummond	Pittsfield, MA
Ben	Gosselin	Bennington, VT
Allen	Gray	Dalton, MA
Richard	Greowe	Lee, MA
Cliff	Hague	Lenoxdale, MA
Cathrine	Hibbard	Lee, MA
Fred	Hines	Williamstown, MA
Jeff	Kellogg	Pittsfield, MA
Anthony	Levesque	Dalton, MA
Betsy	Lewis	Pittsfield, MA
Todd	Morin	Lee, MA
Gail	Palmer	E. Otis, MA
Richard	Pantermehl	Ashfield, MA
Patty	Spector	Lenox, MA
Clarence	Walter	Cummington, MA
Mike	Ward	Pittsfield, MA
Ruth	Wheeler	Lenoxdale, MA
Joe	Zorzin	Peru, MA

B. List of those who provided written input for the Issues, Concerns, and Opportunities:

Paul	De Genaro	4 Wheel Drive Club
E. Heidi	Ricci	Mass Audubon
Garrett	Moore	Riverhead, NY
Jim	McGee	Becket, MA
Joseph	Levanti	Setauket, NY
Paul	Kimball-Smith	Mt. Grace Land Trust
Chris	Horgan	Stewards of the Sequoia
David	Brill	EC4WDA
Robert	Blair	Sayville, NY

C. Summary of Public Input:

The following are the issues, concerns, and opportunities as compiled at a public meeting held on November 4, 2004 at the DCR Regional Office in Pittsfield, MA, and from written input received for the “Berkshire Ecoregional Assessment and Management Framework”. Items # 1 – 10 below are the issues presented to those in attendance by James DiMaio, Chief Forester, from which to begin the discussion. The audience was asked to provide their thoughts/input on these issues, identify additional issues not

presented, and provide any additional comments that should be addressed in the development of the “Berkshire Landscape Assessment and Forest Management Framework”. Items # 11 – 24 below are the additional issues and comments provided by those in attendance that were not attributed directly to items #1 -10 and from written input received. It should be noted that the numbering sequence does not imply any ranking of priorities.

1. **The need to provide for biodiversity for the range of all species: early to mid to late successional forests.**

- Specific percentages as goals?

2. **Invasive species out competing native species.**

- Keep high value sites free of invasive species / jump on new occurrences.
- Widespread public education needed.
- State control over sale of invasive species.

3. **Unhealthy forests due to insects, diseases, non-native tree species, poor species composition.**

- Early detection, rapid response.
- Describe risk to dominant important tree species.
- Public education / outreach.

4. **The need for reserve areas for ecological and habitat objectives, research and education, control areas, and recreation.**

- Motorized recreation allowed?
- Size of reserves / number of reserves?
- Impact on PILOT payments and timber revenues?
- Open to the public?
- Do private lands contribute to reserves?
- Community input in reserves establishment?
- Protection beyond “Cutting Plan”?
- Financial planning for maintaining / policing reserves?
- What activities are allowed in reserves?

5. **The balance between reserves and areas managed for multiple-use purposes.**

- Net increase in harvesting on public lands while establishing reserves.
- Use best available information to plan reserves.
- Economic impact of reserves on towns that currently receive 8.5% of stumpage (make sure that in towns where reserves are established, a balance of economic return is achieved).
- Dedicate equal areas to manage for early successional habitats, long term.

- Commit to maintaining “traditional” forest uses such as recreation, including hunting and fishing.
 - Avoid non-renewable resource extraction and conversion to non-forest use.
 - There’s enough land to accommodate all uses, but all uses don’t have to occur on each acre.
 - Maintain access for disabled, usually motorized.
 - Berkshires receive lots of out-of-state recreational pressure that may not be sustainable.
 - Should Massachusetts public lands be managed primarily for State residents?
 - Berkshires should value economic impact of tourism on otherwise economically challenged area.
6. **The need to meet the Commonwealth’s Rare and Endangered Species and habitat needs.**
- Meet Massachusetts rare specie conservation needs.
 - Speedy clear resolution of “Forest Cutting Plans’ within Natural Heritage polygons.
 - Provide funding for rare species conservation.
 - Don’t hold-up harvesting outside of Natural Heritage polygons.
7. **The need to maintain sustainable forests and a vibrant wood producing industry.**
- As or more important than forest resource issue.
 - To extent possible, forest products should be grown, harvested, processed and sold locally within Massachusetts.
8. **Fragmentation of lands due to land use changes, development, and parcelization.**
- How much forest cover is needed?
 - Incentives for private landowners to maintain large parcels in forest use.
 - This is the biggest contributor to habitat loss.
9. **The need to meet high water quality and quantity standards.**
- Ground water as well as surface water.
 - Maintaining a quality fishery is good standard.
 - Value of water as defining value of the forest.
10. **The need to reproduce forest of high quality such as Northern Red Oak, Cherry, etc.**
- Aesthetics of intensive management for Oak.
 - Recognize the tree species of high commercial value also provide good habitat.
 - Need to create / enhance markets for low value wood products.
 - Sell use of forest management to provide high quality wildlife habitat.

11. **Protecting Riparian Values.**
12. **Financial Business Plan for State Land Management.**
13. **Harvesting on public land should be environmentally sound.**
14. **Economic benefits of harvesting on public land should be reinvested into the forest / habitat / recreation, etc...**
15. **State must work with towns to ensure viable communities are maintained, especially relative to acquisition of public lands.**
16. **Opportunities for future meetings to be dedicated to single issues.**
17. **Lands purchased with sportsmen dollars should be managed to maximize hunting / fishing opportunities.**
18. **If “Green Certification” does not provide good economics, State should reconsider.**
19. **Encourage restoration/ maintenance of fire towers.**
20. **Recognize prescribed fire as a valuable management tool.**
21. **Fire Management Policy for Berkshires.**
22. **Impacts of “Acid Rain” on forest resources of the Berkshires.**
23. **Don’t just post in the “Environmental Monitor”, encourage all stakeholders when advertising public meetings.**
24. **Encourage public meeting for recreational uses.**

II. Summary of Comments Received following the Public Meeting held on June 22, 2005 on draft of the “Berkshire Landscape Assessment and Forest Management Framework” Document, and Responses from the “Core Team”.

On June 22, 2005 a public meeting was held at the DCR Western Regional Office in Pittsfield to solicit input on a draft of the Berkshire Landscape Assessment and Forest Management Framework. The draft was posted on EOEAs web site prior to the meeting. A presentation was provided to those attending on the contents of the draft. This meeting was attended by 48 people. Written comments on the draft were received from 29 people.

Below is an attendance list from this meeting, a summary of the input from those who provided written comments, along with our responses to them. Additional comments were derived from agency personnel on the draft. A number of comments were “editorial” in nature, and for the most part, these are not included in the list below. Some of the comments submitted are best addressed in the next phase of planning to be done on agency properties. However, a substantial number of changes were made to the draft and are presented here in the final version of the document in response to these comments. Substantial changes have been made to section VIII. “Issues, Goals, and Recommendations.

We greatly appreciate the time and attention devoted by all who participated in this public comment process. We are confident that we have addressed the comments provided and that they resulted in a much better final version of this document.

A. List of Attendees from Public Meeting on draft of “Berkshire Landscape Assessment and Forest Management Framework” (June 22, 2005)

Tim	Abbott	Canaan, CT
Shane	Bajnoci	W.D. Cows, Inc.
Carrie	Banks	Riverways / Westfield Wild & Scenic
Thelma	Bates	Sierra Club
Susan	Benoit	Friends of Mohawk Trail S.F.(FMTSF)
Gary	Belvzo	HCC / MTSF
Cosmo	Catalano	MA Appalachian Trail Committee
Eve	Cholmar	Becket, MA
Greg	Cox	Massachusetts Forestry Association
Tony	D'Amato	UMass / Harvard Forest
Justin	Davis	Pittsfield, MA
Jim	DiMaio	DCR
Jeremy	Dunn	Becket, MA
Patricia	Elstren	Sheffield Land Trust
Andy	Finton	TNC
Mike	Fleming	DCR
Jose	Garcia	TTOR Member
Cande	Grieve	Sierra Club Member
Denis	Guyer	State Representative, 2 nd Berkshire Dist.
Brian	Hawthorne	DFG / DFW
Lorraine	Hildemann	Pittsfield, MA
Mark	Jester	DCR Board
Rene	Lanbach	Mass Audubon
Robert	Leverett	FMTSF
Leslie	Luchonok	DRC

Thomas	Marini	Pittsfield, MA
June Ann	Mason	Sierra Club Member
Tim	McGee	Becket, MA
Bob	Mellace	DCR
Barton	Ogden	Pittsfield, MA
Kathy	Orlando	Sheffield Land Trust
Judith	Pierce	Mass Audubon Member
Teah	Quinn	Senator Nuciforo
Jim	Rassman	DCR
Rob	Robinson	Berkshire Chapter AMC
Henry	Rose	Pittsfield, MA
Keith	Ross	Landvest
Norman	Schroeder	B.N.R.C.
Patricia	Swain	DFW / NHESP
Nick	Thielker	Friends of Mt. Everett
Eleanor	Tillinghast	Green Berkshires
Bill	Toomey	The Nature Conservatory
Jeff	Turner	Sierra Club Member
Dominick	Villane	Pittsfield, MA
Eileen	Vining	Appalachian Trail LT
John	Wheller	Berkshire Mycological Society
Jane	Winn	BEAT
Julie	Wormser	Appalachian Club Member
Joe	Zorzin	Peru, MA

B. List of those who provided Written Comments:

Jesse	Brownback	???
John	Clarke	Mass Audubon
Patricia	Cote	Hampden, MA
Dennis	Cronin	unknown
Anthony	D'Amato	Harvard Forest / UMass?
Jeremy	Dunn	Becket, MA
Judith	Eiseman	Kestrel Land Trust
Christine	Erb	unknown
Andy	Finton	TNC
MaryAnna	Foskett	Arlington, MA
Kristi	Frazier	Woburn, MA
Barnett	Goldstein	Mt. Washington, MA
Paul	Karczmarczyk	Roughed Grouse Society, et al
Andrew	Kendall	TTOR
Kathryn	Leary	Wilbraham, MA
Mike	McCarthy	W. Roxbury, MA
James	McGinness	W. Roxbury, MA
Steven	Moore	unknown
Dawn	Odams	Phillipston, MA
Jeffery	Penn	Huntington, MA
Ted	Raia	Cambridge, MA
Kathy	Richards	Athol, MA

Jeffery	Roberts	Newburyport, MA
Philip	Saunders, Jr.	Weston, MA
Narain	Schroeder	BNRC
Carol & Gerard	Stanley	Worcester, MA
Bob	Thompson	WRWSAC
Cheryl	Vallone	Ashland, MA
Hillary	Young	unknown

C. Comments and Responses:

1. Comment:

- Move forward to adopt Forest Reserves quickly. Support Small & Large Reserves. Include maps of 6 reserves in Berkshire Ecoregional Assessment. Premature to set 20% Reserves & 80% active management target prior to evaluating of all lands? Exclude timber harvesting in Old Growth and include Old Growth sites as small and large reserves.

Response:

- Old Growth is the highest priority criteria used in the identification of both small and large scale Forest Reserves. Therefore, all Old Growth stands and areas will be included in any Forest Reserve System adopted.

2. Comment:

- October Mountain State Forest should be protected.

Response:

- October Mountain was not identified as a proposed Forest Reserve using established criteria due to the number of roads, utility lines, recreational uses, existing plantations, and uses currently found within October Mountain State Forest. However, it can be anticipated that a number of Forest Reserves ranging from small to moderately large may be identified in this State Forest during the District Resource Management Planning process.

3. Comment:

- State Forest Reserves should include Natural Heritage Priority Communities.

Response:

- The evaluation criteria for both small and large scale Forest Reserves included Natural Heritage Priority Natural Communities.

4. Comment:

- Use objective Criteria? Include Old Growth data in analysis? Mohawk Trail State Forest-Savoy Mountain State Forest / Berkshire-Vermont Ecoregion, ranked high but not selected, why? Reasons – political? administrative? List them?

Response:

- A Team of scientists and resource managers objectively established the Forest Reserve evaluation criteria and weighted each using the “Expert Choice” process/method. The same team of experts applied the weighted evaluation criteria to establish choice values for each of the twenty-three (23) potential statewide Forest Reserves. A large Forest Reserve is now

proposed for the Mohawk/Monroe State Forest and additional reserves for the Savoy State Forest.

5. Comment:

- Should include financial analysis re: timber values.

Response:

- An in-depth economic analysis for Forest Reserves was not conducted or included in the assessment/framework or the evaluation criteria. The assessment/framework factored social and economic considerations presented by the public who both supported and did not support forest reserves. The assessment also included estimated information on potential losses in revenue as a result of the establishment of forest reserves as well as increases in revenue as a result of implementing the entire assessment/framework recommendations. It is recognized that forest reserves, and forested areas in general, ecological services benefits. It was not the intent of the assessment/framework to calculate or determine the extent of the services.

6. Comment:

- Include areas of the Southern Taconics and Northern Hill Towns with Old Growth in Forest Reserves.

Response:

- These areas will be included in small and large scale Forest Reserves.

7. Comment:

- Include large tract habitat preserves.

Response:

- Large tract habitat will be provided in the small and large scale forest reserves, and in association with the greater surrounding forested landscape.

8. Comment:

- Support vision of Harvard Forests' "Wildlands and Woodlands" report. Establish 15 - 20 large reserves 250,000 acres of state land. Managed woodlands would comprise the remaining state-owned forests and an additional 1.5 million of privately owned forests, and an additional 1.5 million privately-owned forestland totaling 2.25 million acres. More now (fear of no private land available) less latter if additional harvesting/management needed.

Response:

- The proposed small and large scale Forest Reserves is equivalent to the percentage of protected forests in Reserves envisioned by the Harvard Forests Wildlands and Woodlands vision report. Their vision is based upon approximately 2.25 million acres of forest land that is recommended for permanent protection (250,000 acres of large reserves is approximately 10% of this total). The proposed small and large scale forest reserves recommended in this document are based on the premise that approximately 1 million acres are presently protected. The present small and large scale forest reserves proposal of approximately 20% forest reserves of current state forestland is generally supported by the public. Also, on close examination of state lands much of the land may not provide the quality attributes of Forest Reserves such as those used in the Evaluation Criteria. It should also be recognized that Massachusetts Land Trusts, other NGO, private citizens, be noted, and relevant municipal

lands have historically provided active support for land conservation measures that contribute to Forest Reserve attributes.

9. Comment:

- Develop and support EOEAs Program for municipalities that deal with fragmentation and sprawl along old discontinued roads.

Response:

- The closing of old roads for the purpose of reducing fragmentation and sprawl must adhere to established Massachusetts and Federal Law. DCR and DFG often support such road closures but must consider the huge backlog of forest road maintenance on existing state lands.

10. Comment:

- Provide communities with compensation: Payment In Lieu Of Taxes (PILOT) payments and Commonwealth Capital.

Response:

- Revised Recommendations to “Sub-Issue 6.4c”.

11. Comment:

- All cutting plans should consider existing invasive species to insure that prescribed management is appropriate and will not serve to promote the spread of invasive species.

Response:

- Revised Recommendations to “Sub-Issue 1.4c”.

12. Comment:

- Creating markets for low value wood is essential to any plans for the creation and long-term maintenance of early successional habitat

Response:

- EOEAs, DCR, and others are working to encourage the development of such markets. (See “ISSUES” – Recommendations: 6.3c and 6.5c).

13. Comment:

- Make stronger link between identified issues and recommended Forest Management Practices.

Response:

- Presently the Assessment/Framework links issues, state land goals, and recommendations directly. At this time we are not aware of ways to better link issues to recommendations.

14. Comment:

- Adequate funding to implement recommendations of this document.

Response:

- We are in agreement that adequate funding is essential to implement recommendations in the Assessment/Framework. EOEAs has provided more than \$2.5 million in supplemental funding over the past 3 ½ years to support implementation of Green Certification requirements on state lands (\$1.7 million) and to fund Forest Stewardship Plans on 740

private parcels totaling 51,000 acres (\$850,000). We appreciate the support of others to assist in securing funding from all sources for the purpose of implementation and monitoring.

15. Comment:

- How are Forest Management Plans integrated with Comprehensive Management Plans (Ch 21 S. 2F)? Explain process. Assessment should be sent to DFW Board and DCR Stewardship Council for endorsement.

Response:

- All Ecoregional Assessments/Management Frameworks will be developed to document and assess natural resource landscape level data and information, broad private/public issues, and proposed recommended actions that particularly address the issues. State agencies will utilize this information to develop property level resource management plans that fulfill their agencies respective mission, legal mandates, and the conditions of green certification. Resource management plans will include public participation and approval by respective oversight authorities. At DCR the property Forest Management Plans will be utilized as part of future Comprehensive Management Plans.

16. Comment:

- The protection of sensitive sites and the accommodation of recreational needs and scenic values should supersede arbitrary target for % actively managed.

Response:

- The Ecoregional Assessments/Management Frameworks is premised on providing ecological, social, and economic sustainability per the conditions of “Green Certification”. The Assessment/Framework first provide for biological considerations such as rare species and their habitats, forest reserves including Old Growth portions of the 1830 area, etc., water quality, forest health, and in general sets standards for sustainable forests. Remaining lands, now as actively managed forests, contain a multitude of uses and opportunities, including: habitat diversity, quality aquatic systems, a variety of forest settings and experiences, and an opportunity for traditional uses and practices.

17. Comment:

- Majority of harvesting should occur on private forest land.

Response:

- The vast majority of harvesting will occur on private forest lands, the majority of which will come from clearing for development. Forest and Wildlife Management on State lands will meet the sustainability conditions of “Green Certification”.

18. Comment:

- 1830s areas should be treated as reserves except where old intact forests are no longer present.

Response:

- Forest Reserves include a considerable amount of 1830 areas. However, not all 1830 areas are in Forest Reserve areas. 1830 areas, not in Forest Reserve areas, may be managed for a variety of objectives over time. This management should keep in tact the soil structure that makes these lands different from those that had been previously disturbed by past agricultural practices.

19. Comment:

- No harvesting. All reserves. Timber yields small financial returns. Returns exceed personnel expenses. Other values more beneficial.

Response:

- Prohibiting harvesting would result in the agencies not being able to meet many of their goals and missions. The management of State lands allows agencies to provide for a diversity of wildlife, the ability to maintain forest health and water quality, etc... The forest products harvested provide substantial financial and employment opportunities for rural Massachusetts. The returns and benefits exceed State costs. Often, harvesting enhances ecological services at no cost to the taxpayer.

20. Comment:

- We are encouraged that the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) places a high priority on the retention of undeveloped forestland and the formulation of forest policy providing adaptive management options on public land. Active management provides the foundation for true biological diversity of the Commonwealth's wildlife, as all game and non-game wildlife species benefit when diverse habitat conditions are available on a landscape scale.

Response:

- There is support to implement adaptive management policy for forest resource management by EOEA agencies.

21. Comment:

- Public property should not support commercial interests.

Response:

- The legal mandates of EOEA agencies that manage the Commonwealths forests explicitly contain provisions for and requirements of active management with stumpage sold to the private sector and commercial interests. The assessment / framework recommends a thoughtful, careful ecological, economic, and social sustainable balance among all resources activities and uses.

22. Comment:

- Balance working woodlands, recreation and conservation.

Response:

- There is support for the current assessment/frameworks recommendation that carefully and thoughtfully balances forest mgmt., forest reserves, recreation and uses.

23. Comment:

- Support late successional habitat.

Response:

- There was support for the assessments recommendations concerning late and early successional habitat.

24. Comment:

- Assessment should reflect that early successional habitat varies from (increases) west to east via natural disturbances and should reflect this in planning.

Response:

- See 1.2c recommendations

25. Comment:

- Support actively managed reserves to attain early successional habitat goals.

Response:

- Early successional habitat may occur in Forest Reserves via natural disturbances. Early successional habitat, human created or maintained is not planned within Forest Reserves in order to achieve the purposes for which they are being maintained.

26. Comment:

- Prioritize APRs (Agricultural Preservation Restriction).

Response:

- Although not part of the assessment it is not recognized that working farms are an important part and complement forested landscapes. Concerns of farmland APR issues are better directly addressed through the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources. Ongoing efforts to coordinate landscape open space protection program/efforts among state agencies, municipalities and NGOs need to continue.

27. Comment:

- ATV/ORV Licensing.

Response:

- See Sub-Issues 6.2c revised recommendations.

Comment:

ATV/ORV - designated routes only.

Response:

- ORVs/ATVs are restricted to designated trails. Currently DCR is assessing the use of all ORVs/ATVs on DCR / Division of State Parks and Recreation lands in order to minimize adverse environmental impacts.

28. Comment:

- Consider including the following items below at landscape level and interagency planning: size and location of large reserves; age structure across landscape level (distributed); extended rotation and early seral habitat; distribution of native forest communities; interior forest habitat patch size and connectivity.

Response:

- There is support for the assessments/frameworks landscape level and inter-agency planning recommendations concerning reserves, age and distribution of extended rotation and early seral habitat, native forest communities, and interior forest habitat patch size, and connectivity.

29. Comment:

- State should be a good example of sustainable forestry integrated with other public uses for private and municipal owners. Support efforts to increase land protection (implement

Statewide Land Conservation Plan). Increase and improve participation in CH 61/61A. Maintain working forest landscape around forest reserves.

Response:

- There is also support for sustainable forestry integrated with other uses, increased land protection, and the working forest concept around forest reserves. EOEA agencies have focused on protecting land mapped by the SLCP (over 70% of land protected via EOEA funding over the past 3 ½ years – other 30% is mostly grants to cities and towns for local priorities). EOEA agencies have been working with State Legislature to draft new amendments to Chapter 61 that will encourage increased participation in the program. DCR has added 50,000 acres to the Forest Stewardship Program over the past 3 ½ years via EOEA funding of forest management plans.

30. Comment:

- Data misleading? Does not show larger size classes?

Response:

- FIA data does not allow for figures to be adjusted which display all size classes including larger diameter trees (softwoods and hardwoods measurements are different).

31. Comment:

- Include Old Growth research in report. Include Mohawk Trail State Forest-Savoy Mountain State Forest 5K reserve & Monroe State Forest - 2.5K reserve. Benchmarks/Scientific references for active management and effects on biodiversity.

Response:

- Old Growth information is included in the final assessment/framework, including a map of the proposed large scale reserves and alternatives. See Sub-Issue 1.3c (recommendations), which includes evaluating portions of MTSF and SMSF as a forest reserve. Also, see Sub-Issue 1.3c recommendations, which include long- term ecological monitoring for forest reserves and active management. EOEA agencies have contracted UMass to design a reserve/working forest monitoring system with input from forest experts from outside the state as well as state staff.

32. Comment:

- Clarify Old Growth. 3 types - never harvested, lightly harvested, and restored to climax. All forests now influenced by acid rain, & non-native trees, etc.

Response:

- Information on the 3 Old Growth types/classes is provided in the Appendix of the assessment/framework. It is recognized that all forests including OG are influenced by a number of factors, such as acid rain, climate change, etc. that are beyond the scope of the assessment/framework. Non-native species is address in Sub-Issue 1.4.

33. Comment:

- Coordinate "Statewide guidance for siting wind energy facilities"; Statewide Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy"; and "Ecoregional Assessments / Frameworks" for recommendation consistency. Address Landscape Level Ecosystem, fragmentation and biodiversity impacts.

Response:

- In regard to wind energy, there is agreement that all EOEALandscape level planning activities need to be coordinated to ensure consistency in their recommendations.

34. Comment:

- Are any areas to have human activity prohibited or passive only (no trails; snowshoe/hike only)?

Response:

- At this time Forest reserves that prohibit all human developments are not planned. Planned forest reserves presently include limited recreational opportunities on developed trails and off trail hiking, snowshoeing, etc...

35. Comment:

- Clarify Forever Wild discussion - are there practices which should encourage or discourage use of chemical treatments, blow-down or damage repair, invasive removals or native plant restoration?

Response:

- The assessment/framework did not include the “Forever Wild” concept. However, the individual concepts such as use of chemicals, blow-down, invasive plants, native species, etc. were included.

36. Comment:

- Fragmentation statement misleading?

Response:

- See revised text in Section III under the heading: Landuse Trends and Forest Fragmentation

37. Comment:

- Issue: Site plans, coordinate with NHESP. Protect unmapped communities and species as small reserves or protect through special conditions in forest management operations. Vernal Pools should be protected even if not certified. Also address in "Section IX Mgmt. Framework".

Response:

- Resource management plans and site specific forest cutting plans are coordinated with NHESP. Rare species, vegetative communities and landforms are managed according to the level of protection necessary. Where needed these lands will have maximum protection measures. Vernal Pools will be protected according to Massachusetts Forestry Best Management Practices. It appears that Section IX “Management Framework” includes the legislative and regulatory mandates that deal with these issues. DCR contracted with NHESP program to develop “Best Conservation Practices” for the ten listed species that occur most frequently in Forest Cutting Plans and plans to develop additional BCP’s in the next year.

38. Comment:

- Support increased late successional forest in the assessment/framework. Use of “Selective Cutting” and the retention of large trees. Present data by age/size class distribution for desired targets (Fig 15 / Table. 10 should be like Fig. 20 breakdown). Also address in "Section IX Mgmt. Framework"

Response:

- Please note that neither Sub-Issue 1.3 nor the assessment/framework documents a lower than desired amount of late successional forest and old/large trees across the forested landscape. However, the assessment/framework does recommend the establishment of forest reserves as a means to provide for late successional habitat. The State does not recognize the “Selective Cutting” method as a silvicultural system. The small group and individual tree “Selection System” will be used as part of “uneven aged management” within forest management plans. Further details are needed to better address the intent of selective cutting methods identified. Resource Management Plans will address the retention of individual trees and desired targets for species composition, age, and size class distribution.

39. Comment:

- Need more specific information on how potential risks for invasive species introduction during Forest Management Practice activities will be managed and minimized. Berkshire Assessment should address and support implementation of the Department of Agricultural Resources ban/phase out of 140 invasive species plants. Also address in "Section IX Mgmt. Framework".

Response:

- Sub-Issue 1.4 “Native Species” and 4.1 “Unhealthy Forests” address invasive species concerns. Specific details on invasive species management will occur in Resource Management Plans. EOEa supports the DAR ongoing effort of banning the sale of noxious plants in the Commonwealth. Information on the DAR ban, which went into effect on January 1, 2006, is included in the assessment.

40. Comment:

- Goals and recommendations do not reflect all values identified. Goals and recommendations should also address other values (i.e. - fisheries & riparian upland forests).

Response:

- Sub-Issue 5.1c. via the recommendations to promote and implement MA Forest Best Management Practices for water, riparian, and soils inclusively addresses this issue.

41. Comment:

- Address concern and establish Standard Operating Procedures / Best Management Practices addressing ATV/ORV unauthorized access control from FMPs/roads. Also address in "Section IX Mgmt. Framework".

Response:

- ATVs/ORVs use is authorized only on designated trails. Sub-Issue 6.2 addressed unauthorized use via law enforcement, education, and licensing. There is no need to further address this issue in Section IX.

42. Comment:

- Commonwealth should develop “Fire Management Plans”, except Berkshires. Most of Massachusetts is a fire adapted ecosystem. Fire use can be beneficial for invasive species control.

Response:

- DCR has developed a number of Fire Management Plans and recognizes the fire history, fire potential, and potential uses of prescribed burning. See Sub-Issue 7.4...

43. Comment:

- Need to evaluate available biomass and establish harvest and harvest method targets on public and private land to promote good sustainable management. Without, there is a risk of creating a new set of unsustainable forestry practices. Not all net growth should be used for bio-energy. Net Growth sequesters carbon. Trading program would be beneficial. Also address in "Section IX Mgmt. Framework".

Response:

- Sub-Issue 6.3c (recommendations) includes the development of a forested resource study within the ecoregions, which will include existing future and sustainable levels of low grade forest biomass (this study will begin later in 2006 with a recently received federal energy grant). The intent of the assessment/framework and subsequent agency resource management plans is to provide for a long term sustainability of all resources. The State and potential bio-energy interests are not interested in facilities that result in unsustainable forest practices. Furthermore, it is not assumed that all net growth will be harvested for bio-energy. In addition net growth does sequester carbon, which is a benefit. However, the harvesting in subsequent benefits of removing low value, poorly formed, damaged trees may result in the sequestering of the higher amounts of carbon with far greater ecological and social economic values. The State has participated with other New England States in training and discussions on carbon trading systems. At this time carbon trading systems are not well established and insufficient data exists to determine how effective they are.

44. Comment:

- Broaden range of options ch61/61A to address larger issue of forestland conversion to development. Also address in "Section IX Mgmt. Framework"

Response:

- The assessment identifies broad approaches to meet the desired goals of maintaining open forest space in current use. The intent of the assessment is to comprehensively, in an integrated fashion address the issues where possible. Although working forests and fragmentation are separate sub-sections they are tied to each other as well as all sub-sections of the assessment including forestland values and economics. The "Forest Management Framework" was designed for forest management on State lands, vs. private and municipal lands. EOEA agencies are working with the State Legislature to amend Chapter 61 based on input from the forestry and conservation communities to increase enrollment in this program.

45. Comment:

- Make trail users trail managers. ATV use will be there. Create "thruways" with management practices, "ride the crown and pack it down".

Response:

- Agencies are responsible for all trails. Partners, trail adopters, etc. will be encouraged to assist and participate in the management of trail systems.

46. Comment:

- ATV management plan and strategy for use on public land. Most trails poorly designed/adapted to ATV use. Provide funds for correct design and layout.

Response:

- DCR currently is assessing ATV/ORV policies. This effort together with resource management planning will identify ORV/ATV opportunities, trail standards, and funding for the design, layout, construction, and maintenance of trails.

47. Comment:

- Add: "Identify local community ecological, economic and quality of life issues and needs." Diffuse Big Brother/Government feel.

Response:

- Providing sustainable ecological, economic, and social factors assists in the quality of life issues in local communities.

48. Comment:

- DCR / DFW mark boundaries and map.

Response:

- This is an operational issue and will be addressed in District Planning efforts.

49. Comment:

- County Road Status? Close and return to natural state if unneeded?

Response:

- This is an operational issue and will be addressed in District Planning efforts.

50. Comment:

- State offer to private lands adjacent to reserves.

Response:

- The State is considering working with private landowners enrolled in Ch61/61A in obtaining Green Certification for the entire program. By the state funding the certification effort, it removes a limiting factor in private land certification which is securing the finances to obtain and maintain certification.

51. Comment:

- Support Green Certification to promote and achieve sustainable Forest Management efforts.

Response:

- There is support for the Green certification process that provides for the sustainability of our State forest resources. When the certification of Chapter 61 and Forest Stewardship Program lands is complete, there will be nearly one million acres of certified forests in the state.