



# 2009 Land Protection Report

Executive Office of  
Energy and Environmental Affairs



Fall 2009





Citizens of the Commonwealth:

Protecting open space is critical to sustaining a healthy Commonwealth – a fact the Patrick-Murray administration is keenly aware of as we continue to invest significant sums in land conservation. Clean water, undisturbed habitat, farms and forests that supply locally-grown green products, and the recreational opportunities afforded by new parks are among the many benefits of our protection efforts. This past year, we again allocated \$50 million in bond authorization to the land preservation programs of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA). The result was another excellent year for land conservation, with more than 22,000 acres – 34 square miles – permanently preserved.



Credit for this terrific outcome is due to many, and I want to recognize the work of all of our open space conservation partners - non-profit organizations, landowners, municipalities, and the staff of the EEA agencies. These land protection successes are testament to their efforts and an investment that will pay enormous dividends to the Commonwealth for many years to come.

I encourage every citizen of the Commonwealth to visit the great outdoors of Massachusetts to see firsthand the fruits of these efforts. As we continue to protect Massachusetts landscapes, we are all doing our part to provide a legacy of wildlife habitat, signature parks, and working farms and forests for future generations. Led by Secretary Ian Bowles and the staff at EEA, in cooperation with our many partner organizations in the land conservation community, we are continuing this important work and I am confident that at the end of 2010 we will again have a message of accomplishment to share.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Deval Patrick".

Deval L. Patrick,  
*Governor*

My Fellow Citizens:

When Governor Patrick took office, he articulated three land conservation priorities – creation or renovation of urban parks, preservation of farms and forests, and protection of unique native ecosystems. I am very pleased to report that the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) and its agencies have been making great strides on all three.



During the first two and a half years of Governor Patrick's administration, we have protected nearly 54,000 acres of land, including 22,353 acres in fiscal year 2009 – the equivalent of 60 acres a day, or three times the amount of land developed over the same time period.

This historic effort was accomplished with a combination of federal and state funding and support from community organizations, a collaboration that characterizes our approach to land conservation. The 217 projects completed by EEA and its agencies this past year were matched with more than \$21 million in funding from land trusts, conservation organizations, and municipalities. Millions more were invested by these organizations and donated by conservation-minded landowners in other projects across the Commonwealth.

Although Mass Audubon's May 2009 "Losing Ground" report indicates that recent land development is happening at half the rate it was during the 1990s, the Commonwealth still lost 40,000 acres of farms and forests to development between 1999 and 2005. The Patrick Administration is committed to countering this trend with continued and robust investment in land preservation.

As we look ahead to 2010, EEA will continue to support the creation and maintenance of urban parks, protection of critical habitat and conservation of prime agricultural and forest lands. We have made good progress on all three fronts, but there is more work to do. I look forward to working with the conservation community to build on the accomplishments of the past two years as together we create a land conservation legacy we can all be proud of.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ian Bowles". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

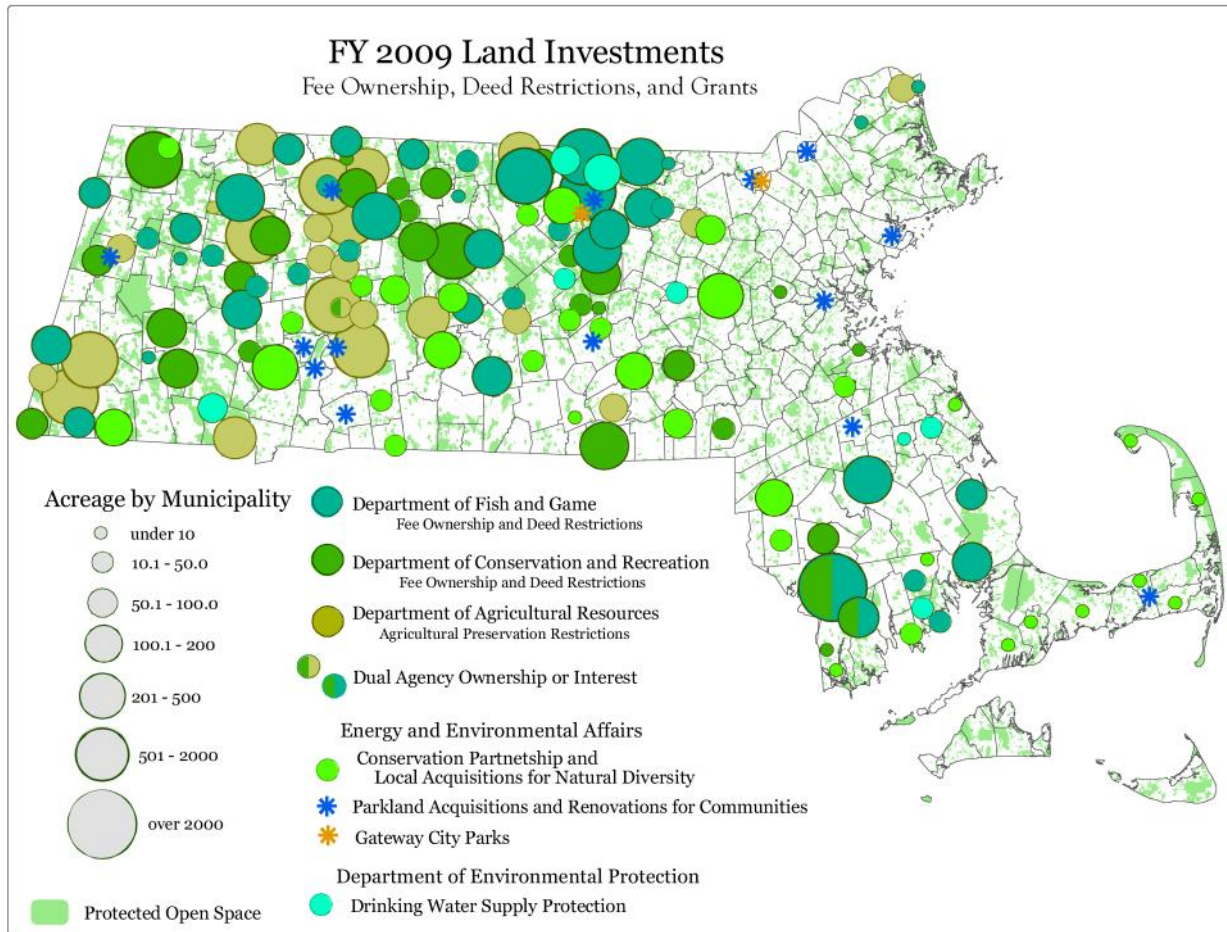
Ian Bowles  
*Secretary*

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## 2009 Land Protection – Summary

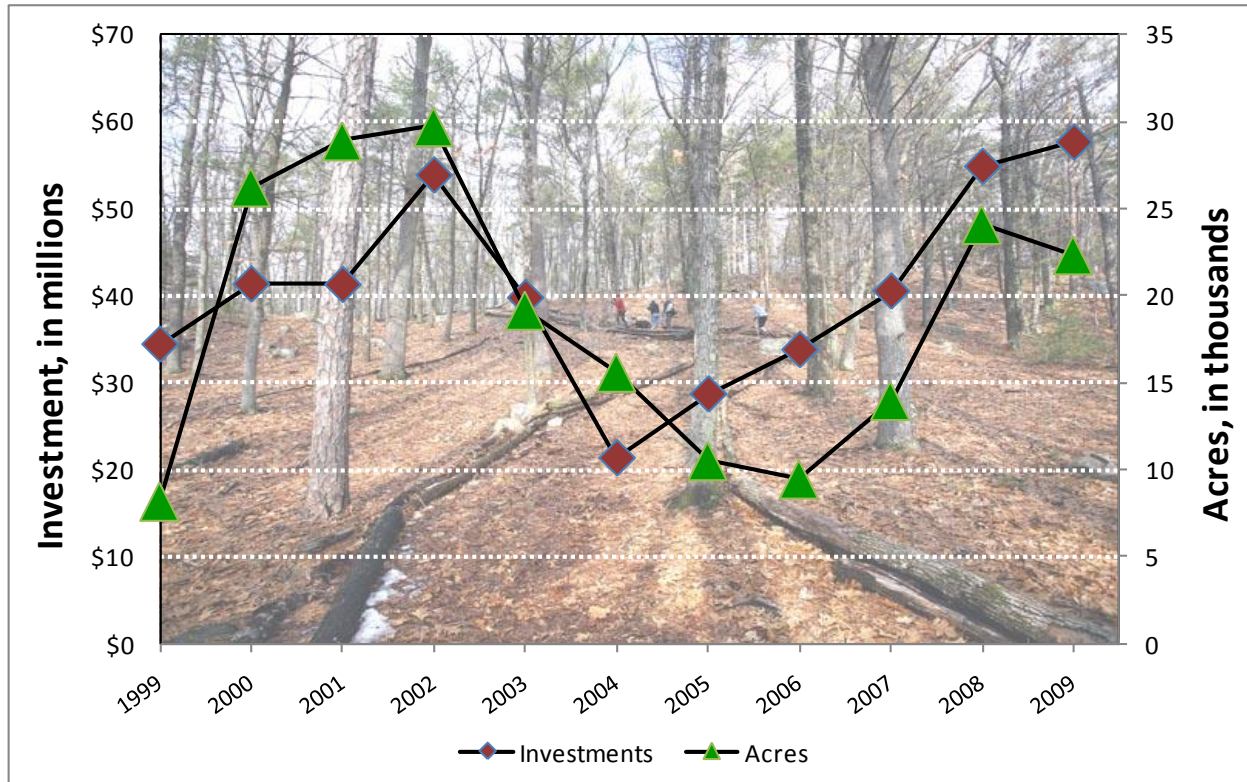
In Fiscal Year 2009 (FY09), EEA actions resulted in the protection of 22,353 acres. Expenditure of \$57.7 million in state and federal funds on 217 projects protected 18,644 acres through grants, fee purchases, and conservation and agricultural preservation restrictions. An additional 3,029 acres were preserved through 147 EEA approved conservation restrictions, and 680 acres via legislation and other means.



In FY09, expenditures were almost evenly split by project type. About one third of the funding was used for each method of land acquisition: outright or fee-simple purchases, acquisition of conservation restrictions, and grants to municipalities and conservation groups for land protection.

Expenditures		Acreage Preserved	
Bond Funding	\$48,854,153	Via Expenditure	18,644
Land Stamp	\$913,625	Via Restrictions	3,029
MWRA	\$3,658,500	Other	680
Federal	\$4,242,570	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22,353</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$57,688,848</b>		

## 2009 Land Protection Report



The state is able to protect three times more land per dollar via restrictions than by purchasing parcels outright. The state spent an average of \$1,779 per acre on restrictions after accounting for 1,493 acres donated at no cost to the Commonwealth versus \$4,789 per acre on fee simple purchases. Restrictions also allow parcels to remain in private ownership, on the tax levy, and, in many cases, in active farming or forestry use. However, restrictions require a long-term management investment, including infrastructure to maintain baseline documentation, ongoing monitoring, and analysis of potential costs associated with corrective action taken against conservation restriction violators. Most of the grants were spent on park rehabilitation and investments rather than buying land. Park investments, through the Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities Program (PARC) and Gateway City Parks Program, were \$7.9 million of the total \$17.8 million spent via grants in FY09.

FY09 Expenditures by Project Type				
	Funds	Percent	Acres	Percent
Grants	\$17,844,365	31%	2,438	13%
Restrictions	\$19,501,535	34%	12,457	67%
Fee Acquisitions	\$17,955,660	31%	3,749	20%
Administrative Costs	\$2,367,287	4%	N/A	N/A
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$57,688,848</b>		<b>18,644</b>	





## Land Priorities

### COMMONWEALTH URBAN PARKS

In supporting parks in urban neighborhoods, particularly the Gateway Cities, the Patrick Administration recognizes that access to parks and recreational opportunities plays a crucial role in making the Commonwealth's cities attractive places to live and work. While Massachusetts enjoys a wealth of rural and suburban landscapes – scenic beaches, hillsides, fields and forests – the majority of Massachusetts residents live in urban areas. High-quality parks and green spaces are essential to the quality of life in our cities, and go hand-in-hand with “smart growth” – providing incentives for businesses to locate and expand within the Commonwealth's urban centers. Urban parks also help promote environmental equity – ensuring that lower income and minority neighborhoods have access to natural resources that are readily available in other areas of the Commonwealth.

#### Highlights:

- 🌍 Creation of 33 new parks over the last two years through the PARC and Gateway City Parks Programs
  - \$12.8 million in PARC funds to complete 58 projects in 48 communities
  - \$8.9 million in Gateway City Parks funds for 14 projects in 12 cities

#### Lawrence, Manchester Street Park PARC Grant: \$500,000

This grant helped the City of Lawrence:

- 🌍 Clean and remediate a former brownfield site for active and passive recreational use;
- 🌍 Extend the Spicket River Greenway along the site; and
- 🌍 Provide new benches, landscaping, and other amenities.



## Fitchburg, Gateway Park Gateway City Parks Grant: \$500,000

The **Gateway City Parks** Program provided a grant to purchase roughly five acres of land along the Nashua River at 41 Sheldon Street. The parcel will help protect water quality, provide flood storage, and – most importantly – create a recreational amenity for the neighborhood. It will also serve as a catalyst for commercial and residential growth in the area, helping to revitalize the city of Fitchburg. This project involves many partners including the city, The Trustees of Reservations, North County Land Trust, Fitchburg Greenways Committee, and the Nashua River Watershed Association. Work is underway, also with Gateway City Parks Program funds, to conduct visioning and produce park design and construction documents.



## COMMONWEALTH WORKING LANDSCAPES

The Patrick Administration also supports conservation of prime agricultural and forest land that is critical to ecological integrity and supports local sustainable agriculture and forest industries, contributing more than \$1 billion annually to Massachusetts' rural economies. More than 92 million board feet of timber are sustainably harvested annually in Massachusetts, creating a large market for locally grown forest products that are harvested, produced, and sold in Massachusetts. These lands are also critical to the character and scenic beauty of many rural Massachusetts cities and towns.

### FY09 Highlights:

- 🌍 Thousands of acres of working landscapes, including lands actively managed for forest products, were permanently protected through EEA expenditures.
- The Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) Program invested \$10.6 million to protect 1,927 acres on 33 farms.
- The Farm Viability Program secured five- or 10-year restrictions on an additional 1,626



acres, while providing \$1 million in funding to improve the viability of 18 farms.

- Of the acres protected via expenditure, 78 percent was forested.
- 🌐 The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) launched its Working Forests Initiative with the Massachusetts Farm Bureau and University of Massachusetts Extension School to help encourage quality forestry on private lands by providing incentives for forest landowners.
- More than 100 forest landowners received forest management planning assistance via private foresters in exchange for committing to preserve their land – more than 6,900 acres – for at least 10 years.
- 🌐 EEA agencies protected thousands of acres of prime soils—areas with the best potential for farm and forest growth.
  - 2,950 acres prime farm soils.
  - 8,200 acres prime forest soils.

### Whately, Harvest Farm



An exemplary 2009 project was the acquisition of an **Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR)** valued at \$356,250 on 45 acres of the Harvest Farm, a wholesale greenhouse plant and vegetable farm in the Connecticut River Valley. The farm started in 1979 with eight acres and one greenhouse and has grown to 150 acres and almost an acre of greenhouse space. To expand their business, the owners utilized the proceeds of the APR sale to assist with the purchase of additional farmland.

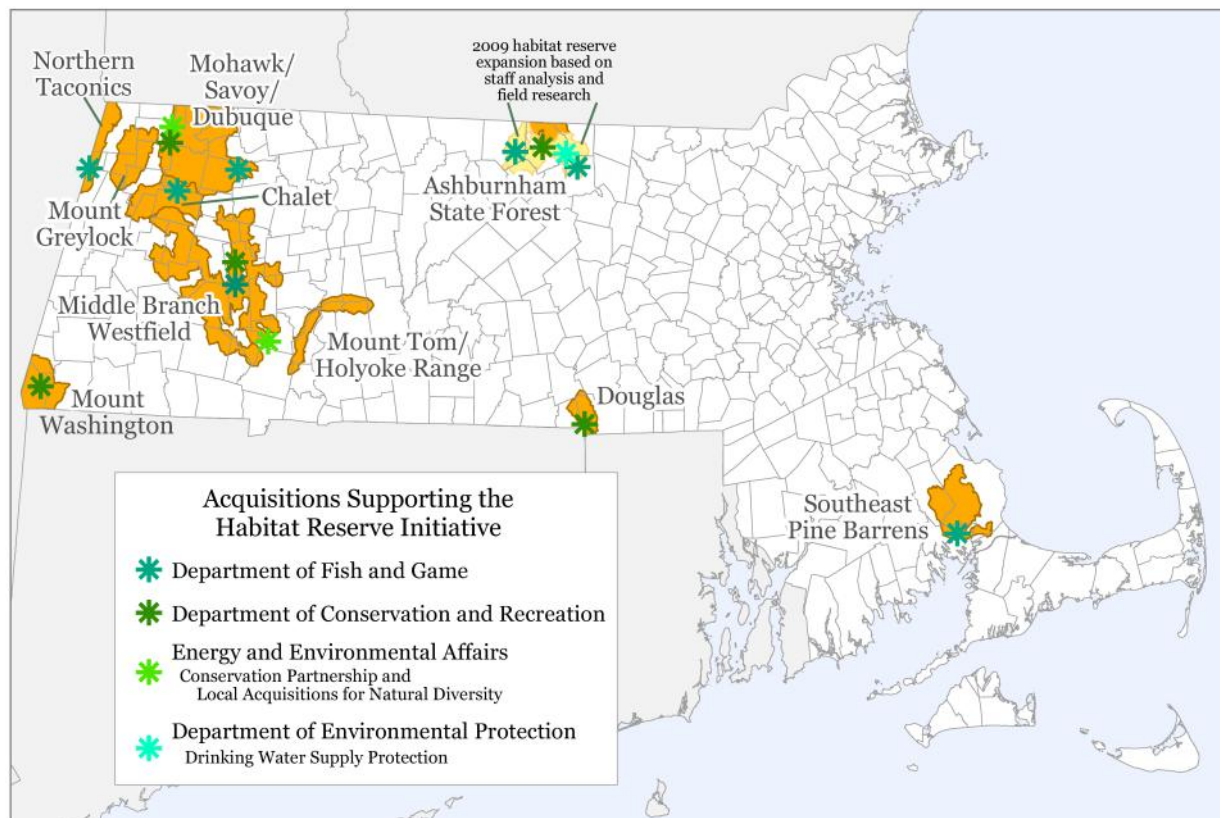
## COMMONWEALTH HABITAT RESERVES

EEA has targeted 10 large, unfragmented ecosystems across the state for conservation in order to protect our most unique large habitats for future generations and to serve as attractive destinations for the Massachusetts “green tourism” industry. These reserves include mountain tops, wilderness areas, sustainably managed forests and forest reserves, and wild rivers.

Shown on the map on the following page are the original 10 reserves that have been targeted for protection over the past two years, as well as additions to the reserves made in FY09. Also shown on the map are 2009 acquisitions within the reserves.

These undisturbed forests also serve as critical habitat and wildlife research areas. In 2009,

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habitat reserve surveys in Worcester County on the Douglas and Ashburnham reserves yielded the presence of previously unknown populations of three globally uncommon species of dragonflies and damselflies. The preliminary results from both reserves surveyed found sites for 14 Massachusetts Endangered Species Act listed rare species: three endangered and five threatened species, and six species of special concern. As a result of the surveys, state officials identified numerous bogs, wetlands and 70 seasonal ponds known as vernal pools, which serve as vital habitat for a host of rare turtles and salamanders.

### 2009 Land Protection Highlights:

- 🌐 4,053 acres in the habitat reserves permanently preserved
  - As part of EEA's Habitat Reserve Initiative, DCR invested \$2.1 million and DFG \$5.4 million to protect 1,270 and 2,607 acres respectively. Another 59 were protected via conservation restrictions approved by Secretary Bowles.
- 🌐 Approximately 86 percent – more than 15,000 acres – of the land protected in FY09 was critical habitat land mapped by the Department of Fish and Game's (DFG) Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) including:
  - 3,699 acres of NHESP Priority Habitat; and
  - 8,710 acres of NHESP BioMap Core Habitat.
    - ◇ In FY09, 48 percent of land protected via purchase was BioMap Core Habitat compared to 37 percent from 1999 to 2002 and 38 percent from 2003 to 2004.



## Projects in Plymouth

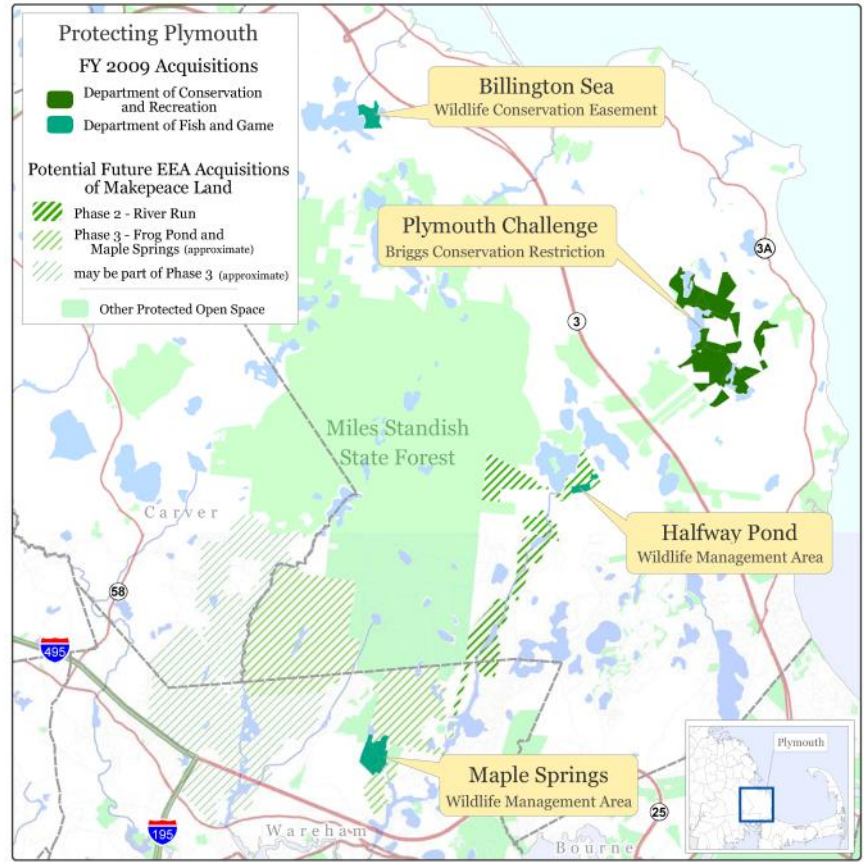
In FY09, the DCR and the DFG each acquired parcels in Plymouth, adding more than 1,000 acres of protected land to existing holdings. Two of the purchases help to protect ecologically important and globally significant pine barren habitat that is home to a variety of state and/or federally listed species in an area undergoing rapid development. Plymouth is one of the top five communities in the state with more than 100 records of state listed rare plant and animal species.

### Plymouth Challenge:

This past year saw the culmination of the “Plymouth Challenge.” In 1997, the town of Plymouth was challenged to match a \$3.5 million state pledge to protect land in partnership with the Commonwealth. Plymouth began by producing wildlife, trail, and master plans. Next, town officials utilized federal money, local funds, and the state matching funds they triggered – as well as land use tools such as cluster zoning and transfer of development rights – to preserve targeted open space. In the end, the Plymouth Challenge was a tremendous success. Over the past 12 years in Plymouth, more than \$18 million was invested in open space conservation and more than 5,700 acres were permanently preserved, representing close to 10 percent of the community’s total land area.

### AD Makepeace:

In FY 09, the DFG collaborated with a coalition of land trust and conservation organizations, the town of Plymouth, and the AD Makepeace Company – a cranberry grower and largest private landholder in Eastern Massachusetts – to protect thousands of acres in Carver, Plymouth and Wareham. The deal involves the 160-acre Maple Springs South and Halfway Pond West acquisitions shown on the map and two long-term conservation options. The first option allows the agency to acquire the restricted fee interest of certain portions of Makepeace property along the Agawam River once the required conservation restrictions under the pending Massachusetts Endangered Species Act permit are in place. The second option gives DFG the ability to purchase the restricted fee interest of portions of Makepeace property immediately to the west and south of Myles Standish State Forest, once conservation restrictions required pursuant to rare species permitting are in place. As Makepeace has no immediate plans to develop the Frogfoot or Maple Springs North properties, the option will be in place for 30 years.



These options are shown on the map as Phase 2 and Phase 3. By acquiring the underlying fee interests in these properties, the DFG ensures the lands are fully protected as conservation land in perpetuity, that they are properly managed to safeguard rare species habitat, and that they remain open and available for public recreational use.

### Otis, Upper Spectacle Pond

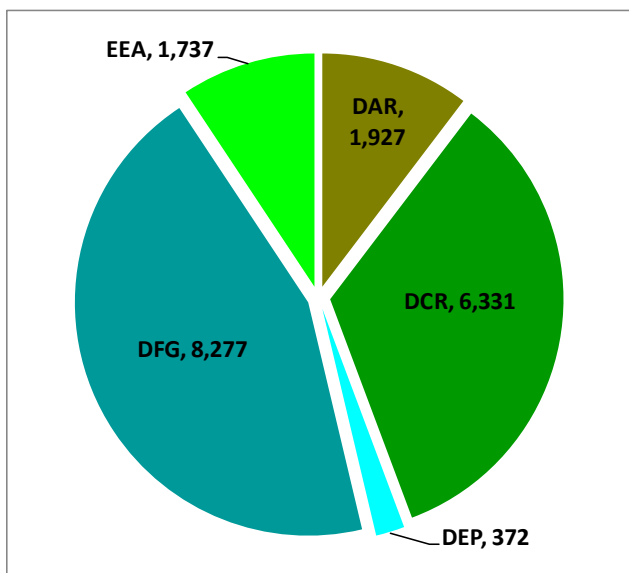
DCR, in partnership with the Massachusetts Audubon Society, conserved the 133 acre Upper Spectacle Pond Property, one of the most critical unprotected parcels remaining in Otis. The property is located in close proximity to 900 spectacular acres DCR acquired at Lower Spectacle Pond last fiscal year and features 4,000 feet of shared boundary with Otis State Forest. The parcel is also part of an 8,500-acre mosaic of unfragmented forestland that conserves and provides space for unique natural and cultural resources, and a multitude of recreational activities including hiking, skiing, hunting, and fishing. A critical partner in the project, Mass Audubon acted quickly to pre-acquire the property, which was under imminent threat of development, and hold it until DCR was able to purchase the property in January of 2009.



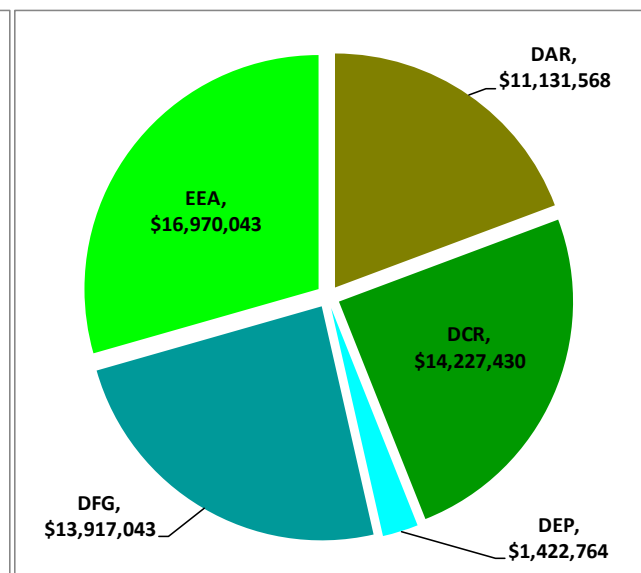
## EEA and Agency FY09 Land Accomplishments

EEA and four of its agencies played a key role in realizing the Patrick Administration's FY09 land conservation goals. This section outlines agency funding, key programs, and results achieved.

*Acres Protected by Agency*



*Expenditures by Agency*





## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES



This year, the DAR conserved more than 1,927 acres of farmland permanently through 33 APR projects. In addition, 1,626 acres were placed under five- or 10-year agricultural covenants through the Farm Viability Enhancement Program.

	APR	Farm Viability
<b>Funds Expended</b>	\$11.1 million (includes \$1.1 million in federal funds and \$559,518 in administration costs)	\$950,000
<b>Acres Protected</b>	1,927 (permanently)	1,626 (five to 10 years via restriction)
<b>Total Projects</b>	33	18
<b>Communities</b>	22	18

Statistics recently released by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service are positive and indicative of the vibrancy of the agricultural sector in Massachusetts. Due in part to the DAR's conservation policies and programs, the number of farms and farm revenue in Massachusetts has increased more than 27 percent from 2002 to 2007. These ef-

forts resulted in the first no-net-loss of farmland in recent history.

The **Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR)** Program is a voluntary program that pays farmers of prime agricultural land the difference between the fair market value and the agricultural value of their farmland in exchange for a permanent deed restriction, which precludes development or any use of the property that will reduce its agricultural viability.

### Celebrating 750 APRs Across the State

In 2009, the APR Program recorded its 750th APR. During the program's 30-year history, more than 63,000 acres of farmland have been protected. Realization of this benchmark follows closely on the heels of the 700th APR – also accomplished during the Patrick Administration. These accomplishments are due to the diligent work of DAR staff, strong interest from farmers, the support of the land trust community, and significant state funding.

While improving the financial bottom line and environmental integrity of participating farms, the **Farm Viability Enhancement** Program also helps to preserve key agricultural land. The program funds projects to make farms more efficient, economically viable, and environmentally friendly and funding is contingent upon covenants with the state to protect land from development for five- and ten-year peri-



ods, depending on project funding awards. Farmers who implement the program's business plan recommendations and keep their farms in agricultural use for these time periods are eligible for DAR funding. More than 99 percent of the 300-plus farms enrolled in the program since its inception remain in business today.

### Westhampton, Outlook Farm

In 2009, Outlook Farm in Westhampton was the recipient of \$50,000 under the **Farm Viability Program** for the purchase and installation of an ultraviolet cider pasteurizer and bulk tank and other improvements, including cider press repairs and upgrades to the apple conveyor and washer. All of these enhancements contribute to the economic success of the business and keep the land in farming. In addition, as a condition of the funding, 26 acres of land are now protected from development for 10 years by a restrictive covenant.



## THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION



To protect and enhance Massachusetts's natural, historic, and recreational resources the DCR added 6,002 acres to the State Forest, State Park, and watershed system in 2009. Acquisitions protected lands - known as inholdings - within existing state parks and strategically expanded parks and forests. Protection and other strategic conservation goals were accomplished by purchasing adjacent lands, unique habitats, outdoor recreation sites, and watersheds.

<b>Funds Expended</b>	\$14.2 million (includes \$3,658,500 in MWRA funds; \$1.7 million in Forest Legacy funds; \$155, \$558,773 in administration and due diligence costs; and \$155,000 in Working Forest Initiative funds)
<b>Acres Protected</b>	6,331 (1,031 via Division of Water Supply Protection acquisitions and 329 via Forest Legacy direct grants to municipalities)
<b>Total Projects</b>	50
<b>Communities</b>	31

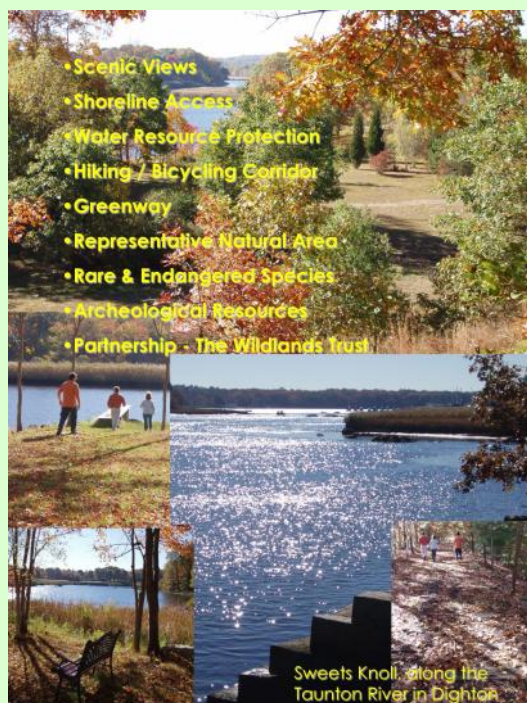
In FY 2009, the DCR's state and urban parks land protection staff successfully protected 26 properties totaling approximately 4,970 acres that are now permanently part of the DCR's park system. The DCR spent more than \$8 million in capital funding and leveraged more than \$1 million in partner contributions and bargain sales. Three of the 26 transactions, which conserved thousands of acres, were gifts or no-cost transac-



tions. As part of EEA's Habitat Reserve Initiative, DCR protected 1,270 acres and spent over \$2 million within the reserves. Finally, DCR protected 329 acres in three municipalities using \$556,172 from the DCR administered **Forest Legacy Program**.

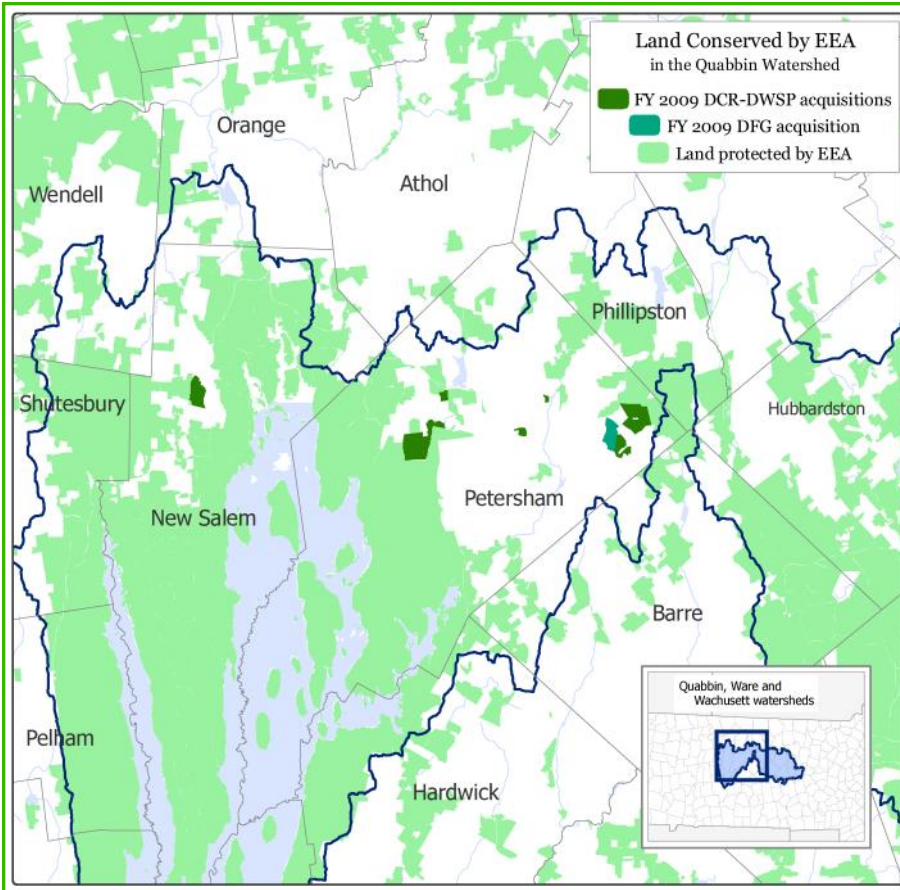
Collectively, these properties help to conserve a variety of significant water resources, rare species habitats, and unfragmented forestland; support and buffer existing land and facilities; and add recreational opportunities to the system. The acquisitions include long sought after parcels including land in the extensive Douglas Woods, a beautiful park-like property along the Taunton River; some of the last critical in-holdings at Willard Brook State Forest and Blue Hills State Reservation; a waterfront property with an approved subdivision overlooking Upper Spectacle Pond in Otis; and key parcels along the Connecticut River.

### Dighton, Segregansett River State Park



Purchased in partnership with the Wildlands Trust and Sheehan Foundation, this new 56 acre state park is a valuable addition to a region that is working to increase the amount of publicly-accessible open space. Segregansett Park, also known as the Medeiros Property, provides a variety of public recreation options including river access for kayaks and canoes, walking trails meandering along the river's shores, picnicking, fishing, and spectacular views of the Taunton River. The acquisition also protects important riparian shoreline and habitat for state and federally listed species along the federally designated Taunton Wild and Scenic River. The property features more than two miles of abandoned rail corridor that could be the site of a future rail trail. The park also abuts the Bristol County Agricultural High School offering both the possibility of a partnership to provide environmental education and a source of volunteers to help improve and maintain the park.

Within DCR, the Division of Water Supply Protection is responsible for another important on-going effort – protection of land around the Quabbin and Wachusett Reservoirs. Utilizing funding for watershed acquisitions provided by the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) via consumer water fees, the Division acquired some high priority and long pursued tracts in both the Quabbin and Wachusett watersheds. The DCR spent a total of \$571,500 to acquire 450 acres of Watershed Preservation Restriction projects on the Quabbin, including the 287-acre Selden inholding property on Fever Brook in Petersham (see below) and the 133-acre West Hill project in New Salem. On the Wachusett watershed, the DCR spent \$3,087,000 to protect 167 acres including thousands of feet of stream and pond frontage. Finally, federal



funds from the Forest Legacy Program completed five Quabbin Corridor projects (all in Petersham) protecting 393 acres in the east branch sub-basin of the Swift River.

As shown on the map, in order to protect the quality of the water upon which so many Massachusetts residents depend, the DCR took steps to preserve land around the Quabbin Reservoir. Through the Division of Water Supply Protection, the DCR permanently conserved land through 10 projects in 2009. An additional 130 acres were protected in four projects by the DFG.

### Petersham, Stony Lane Farm



In the Selden family since 1981, Stony Lane Farm comprises approximately 270 acres of fields, ponds, streams, wetlands and managed forestland. Surrounded by other protected Quabbin watershed lands, the farm sits above and along the East Branch of Fever Brook, a tributary to the Quabbin Reservoir. In 2007, the DCR began working with the landowner, Stephanie Selden, to achieve her goal of preserving the natural resources and beauty of the landscape and waterways. Ms. Selden wanted to ensure that her nine grandchildren and their families would be able to experience the property in years to come.

A Watershed Preservation Restriction on most of the acreage was acquired in July of 2009 by the DCR.



## THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

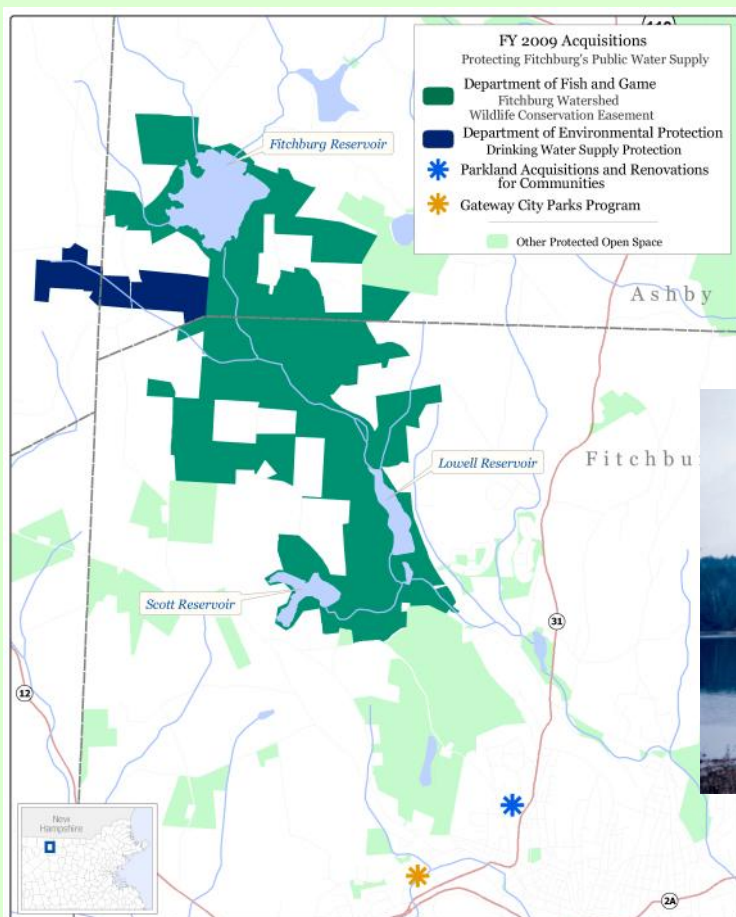


Conserving key parcels of vulnerable land in order to prevent contamination from inappropriate land uses is vital to ensuring that the Commonwealth will always have an abundant supply of clean water. In FY09, the **Drinking Water Supply Protection** Program contributed 372 acres to the Commonwealth's land conservation efforts at a cost of \$1.4 million. This DEP conservation program provides grants to municipalities and public water systems to purchase land or conservation restrictions in order to protect existing public drinking water supplies. Since 2005, the Commonwealth

has invested more than \$7.2 million to protect 1,744 acres of land in strategic locations across the state as part of a comprehensive approach to protect drinking water sources.

<b>Funds Expended</b>	\$1.4 million
<b>Acres Protected</b>	372
<b>Total Projects</b>	7
<b>Communities</b>	6

### Fitchburg, 2009 Acquisitions



Two exemplary DEP land conservation projects – the Crocker/Cassano and Rice land acquisitions – permanently protect the water supply in the city of Fitchburg. These acquisitions ensure that 173 acres of land critical to water supply are protected from development. In addition, the DFG purchased a 1,875 acre conservation restriction over Fitchburg water supply lands.



## THE DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME



In 2009, an impressive 8,277 acres of key fish and wildlife habitat in 43 towns were protected through the efforts of the DFG and its Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MassWildlife). These lands will be added to more than 170,000 acres currently under the care and control of MassWildlife, most of which are Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs). A map of the communities in which properties were acquired in FY09 is on the web at:

[www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/habitat/land/land\\_acquisitions.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/habitat/land/land_acquisitions.htm).

<b>Funds Expended</b>	\$13.9 million (including \$913,625 in Land Stamp funds, \$662,700 from the Forest Legacy Program, and \$491,383 in administration and due diligence costs)
<b>Acres Protected</b>	8,277
<b>Total Projects</b>	56
<b>Communities</b>	43

The primary mission of the DFG and MassWildlife land acquisition program is to protect the ecological integrity of the Commonwealth. The agency seeks to ensure biological diversity by acquiring

the most important fish and wildlife habitat and natural communities and to provide public access to the lands and waters of the Commonwealth for fishing, hunting, trapping, wildlife observation, hiking, and other passive wildlife-related recreation. WMAs include river corridors, wetlands, various types of forested upland, habitat for state listed endangered and threatened species and species of special concern, and high-quality examples of other important habitat types.

Funding for the land acquisition program comes from several sources. The primary funding mechanism is the Commonwealth's open space bond authorization. Fishing, hunting and trapping license buyers also contribute a \$5 fee, known as the "land stamp" to the Wildlands Fund for wildlife habitat acquisition as an additional revenue source. DFG also competes for several federal grant programs to supplement its land protection efforts.

In FY09, nine conservation restrictions played a major role in the agency's habitat protection efforts. The largest is the 4,300 acre conser-



vation restriction jointly held by the DFG and the Department of Conservation and Recreation over the Fall River Bioreserve. The execution of this restriction concludes a project that the agencies and the city of Fall River worked on for several years. Under the restriction, the land is permanently set aside and is open to the public, protecting critical habitat for wildlife and the water supply for thousands of Fall River residents.



MassWildlife is also conducting a research project to help EEA and the agencies understand and react to climate change. The MassWildlife is working with Marnomet Center for Conservation Sciences and The Nature Conservancy to complete vulnerability assessments of 20 habitats identified in the State Wildlife Action Plan, under climate change conditions. These assessments are being conducted through an expert panel approach, under both high- and low-greenhouse gas emissions scenarios. The information gathered will help MassWildlife identify a relative ranking of habitat vulnerability within the state – ranging from expected complete loss of the habitat type to expected increase in the habitat type. Finally, results of the habitat vulnerability assessments will be added as a factor to the existing land acquisition process used by MassWildlife to rank potential targets for protection, and by the Wildlife Habitat Management Group to set priorities for active habitat projects.

## EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS AND THE DIVISION OF CONSERVATION SERVICES



EEA is responsible for four state land conservation programs and administers one federal program that collectively invested \$17 million in land acquisition and park creation and renovation in FY09.

EEA's Division of Conservation Services manages three of the state land programs: the **Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity (LAND)** Program, the **Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC)** Program and the **Conservation Partnership** Program. Together these programs pro-

protected 1,733 acres at a cost of \$13.6 million in FY09.

The LAND Program provided \$6.8 million in grants to 20 communities, helping to conserve 1,239 acres. The purpose of the program is to help cities and towns acquire land for conservation and passive recreation including hiking, wildlife watching, fishing, hunting and cross-country skiing.

<b>Funds Expended</b>	\$17 million (including \$818,313 Land and Water Conservation Funds and \$759,613 in administration costs )
<b>Acres Protected</b>	1,738
<b>Total Projects</b>	72
<b>Communities</b>	67



## Brewster, Quivett Marsh Vista Project



In 2009, Brewster received a \$351,000 **LAND** grant to help fund the bargain purchase of two large marsh front building lots between historic Old Kings Highway and the Quivett Creek estuary on Cape Cod Bay. Pursuant to a condition of the sale, an abandoned 1950's era strip motel on the site was demolished. The town restored the site by building a small trail and picnic area to take advantage of marsh views. This project is significant both as a site restoration project and as one of Brewster's first Community Preservation Act acquisitions. It is also an example of successful land conservation collaboration among state and local governments and community organiza-

tions. The state, town, Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts, Brewster Conservation Trust, and Dennis Conservation Trust all contributed to the project.

In support of the Patrick Administration's Commonwealth Urban Parks Initiative, the PARC Program constructed or renovated dozens of parks at a cost of nearly \$6 million. In addition, EEA's **Gateway City Parks** Program invested \$1.8 million to create and restore urban parks including acquisition of five acres of new public park land.

The **Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund** (LWCF), which in 2009 invested \$818,313 in two projects located in Plymouth and Orleans, is also managed by the Division of Conservation Services.

The PARC Program, which funds the acquisition of land and the construction or rehabilitation of park facilities, provided \$5.9 million in funding for 28 park projects in 26 communities. Parks provided through this program are critical to the Commonwealth Urban Parks Initiative, which seeks to improve quality of life by providing access to open space and recreational opportunities in urban neighborhoods.

Conservation Partnership Program grants for 16 projects resulted in the conservation of 483 acres at a cost of \$887,356. These grants are designed to help nonprofit organizations purchase and permanently conserve land for conservation or recreation. Projects are prioritized for funding based on their ability to conserve biodiversity, protect water quality, promote recreation, and preserve working farms and forests.

In FY09, the Gateway City Parks Program hired the landscape architecture firm Brown,

## Holyoke, Jones Ferry River Access Center

This exemplary 2009 **PARC** project constructed a new handicapped accessible building complete with an energy efficient roof, a resurfaced boat ramp, and improved lawns and landscaping on this Connecticut River site. With a total cost of just over \$1 million, half provided by a PARC grant of \$500,000, the Jones Ferry project represents a successful partnership between the Commonwealth and the city of Holyoke to improve a facility that hosts a community rowing program serving at-risk youth.



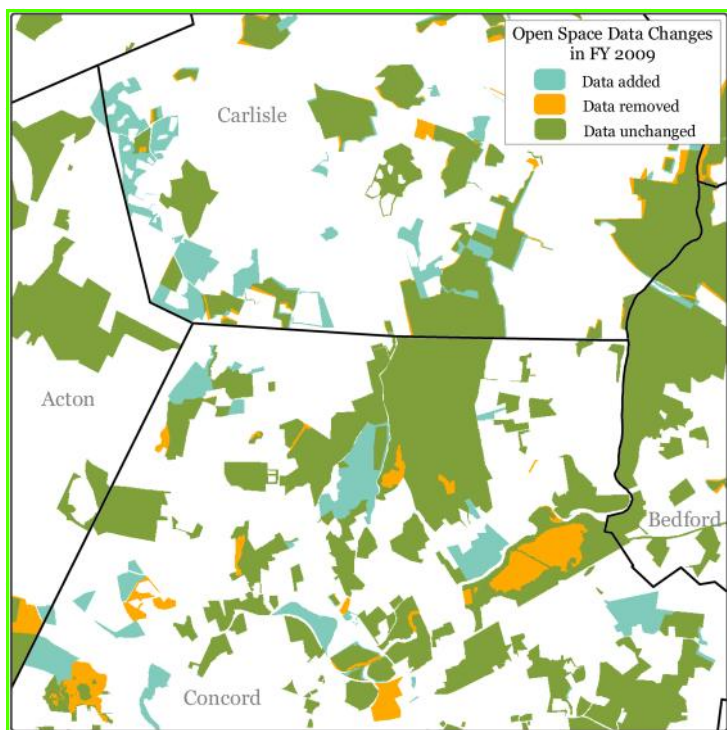
Richardson, and Rowe to help administer the program, assessed park needs in 11 cities, provided funding for six projects - including construction of a greenway along the Neponset River and acquisition of five acres for a park in Fitchburg along the Nashua River, and announced funding for eight other projects set to launch in FY10.

Another important investment of land protection funding in 2009 was in geographic information system (GIS) data. Protected and recreational open space data contains the boundaries of conservation land and outdoor recreational facilities in Massachusetts with each parcel linked to information about ownership, level of protection, public accessibility, assessor's maps and lot numbers, and related legal interests held on the land (e.g. conservation and agricultural restrictions). This data is vital to future land stewardship activities.

With the appropriation of bond funds in August 2008, EEA hired a database administrator and two employees to complete the open space data project. This enabled EEA to incorporate into the existing open space database a backlog of agricultural preservation restrictions; open space data received from municipalities, land trusts, and regional planning agencies; and conservation restrictions approved by the Secretary. In addition, an internet-based data input tool was developed to allow GIS users to submit data. The accomplishments of the GIS staff over the last year include:

- the addition of 53,087 acres of open space records;
- editing of open space data in 198 municipalities to improve accuracy (see inset map on next page); and
- review of 209 individual holdings owned in fee by land trusts totaling more than 16,000 acres.

In 2009, users downloaded the open space data more than 1,700 times and viewed more than



29,000 maps depicting the open space. With this data, EEA determined that there are more than 1.2 million acres of permanently protected land in Massachusetts. This figure exceeds the amount of developed land in the Commonwealth.

This map illustrates the work done by Mass-GIS, a division of EEA, to update and correct the open space database. Shown in blue are lands added to the database. Shown in orange are lands removed from the open space data layer as corrections were made.

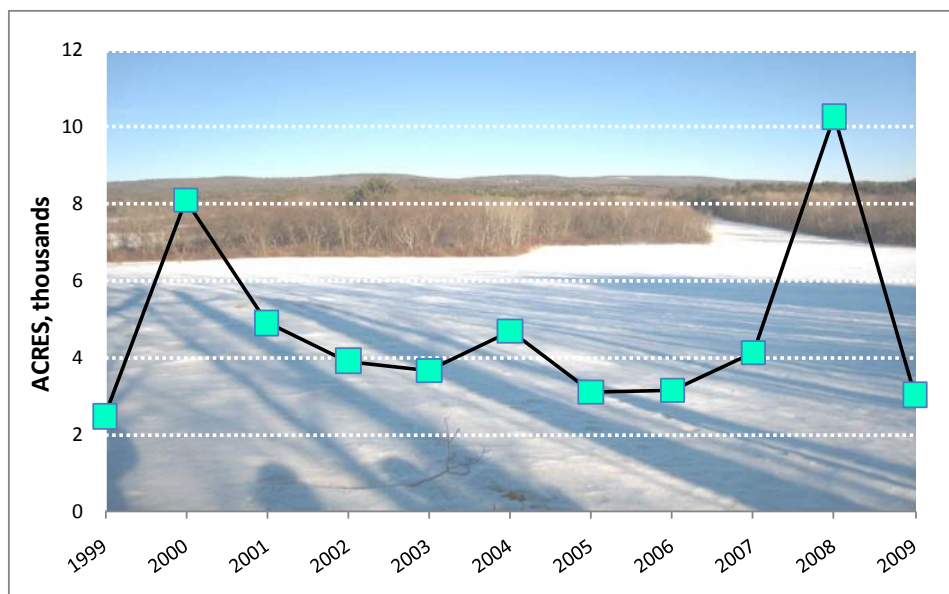
## Conservation Restrictions

The Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs is charged with reviewing conservation restrictions (CR) to ensure they serve a public purpose, such as habitat or water resource protection. Massachusetts is the only state with this important secretarial review requirement. A CR is a legally binding agreement between a landowner and a public agency or private land trust, whereby the owner agrees to limit the use of his or her property in order to protect certain conservation values. A restriction can be made permanent only through approval by the Secretary pursuant to Chapter 184. CRs are recorded with deeds and remain with the land permanently, even when it is sold.

In addition to preserving open space for future generations, CRs afford landowners various tax benefits. Making a donation of a CR can

<b>Acres Protected</b>	3,029 *
<b>Total Restrictions</b>	147

\* 4,222 acres were protected via restrictions signed by the Secretary in FY09, but 1,193 of those acres also involved state funding and are counted in the agency programs.





also reduce or eliminate a property owner's estate taxes and reduce future real estate taxes. The significant drop in CR acres in FY09 as compared to FY08 is due to an unusually high number of acres preserved that year as landowners hurried to take advantage of an expiring federal income tax deduction.

CRs approved in FY09 protected 29 acres in Westford containing rare species habitat, five acres that safeguard drinking water in Swansea, 25 acres of active farmland in Sutton, and many other important natural resources. The Secretary's approval of these restrictions is the final step in a long process of work by land trusts, conservation commissions, community preservation committees, and landowners who negotiated, funded, and drafted restrictions, and/or donated land.

## Land Protection Partners

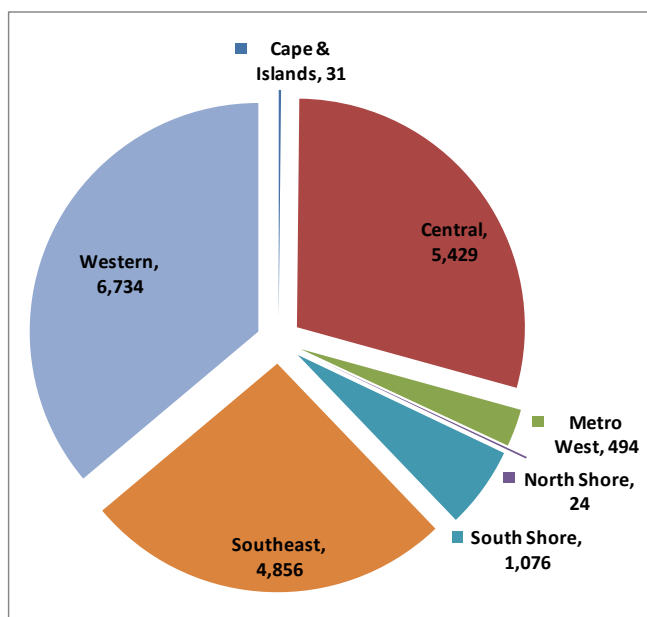
In FY09, the Commonwealth's investment of \$53.4 million was matched by just over \$21 million in funding from landowners, non-profit organizations, municipalities, and other parties. In addition, funding from federal sources amounted to just over \$4.24 million dollars in FY09.



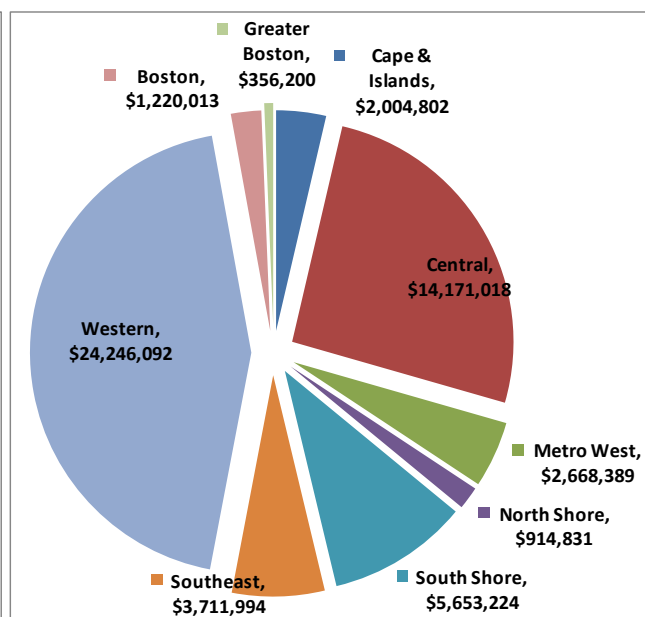
## Investments by Region

The Central and Western regions of the state are home to most of the Commonwealth's habitat reserves and working landscapes. In urban areas, most of the spending went toward park investments and rehabilitation.

Acres Protected via Expenditure by Region



FY09 State Land Investment by Region



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Top Left: Attleboro, Brothers Pond at the National Shrine of Our Lady of La Salette.

Photo credit: Charlie Wyman, Mass Audubon

Top Right: Pelham, Well Away Farm. Photo Credit: The Kestrel Trust

Middle: Worcester, Blackstone Woods. Photo Credit: Charlie Wyman, Mass Audubon

Bottom: Westport, Schildkrout Conservation Restriction. Photo Credit: David Outman, The Trustees of Reservations

Page 3: Sudbury, Nobscot Scout Reservation Conservation Restriction. Photo Credit: Sudbury Valley Trustees

Page 4: Lawrence, Manchester Street Park. Photo/Graphic Credit: Groundwork Lawrence

Page 5: Fitchburg, Gateway Park. Photo/Graphic Credit: Brown, Richardson, and Rowe

Page 6: Whately, Harvest Farm. Photo Credit: MDAR

Page 9: Otis, Upper Spectacle Pond. Photo Credits: DCR

Page 10: Orange, Gale Farm. Photo Credit: Mount Grace Land Trust

Page 11: Westhampton, Outlook Farm. Photo Credit: Outlook Farm

Page 12: Dighton, Segregansett River State Park. Photo Credit: DCR

Page 13: Petersham, Stony Lane Farm. Photo Credit: Stephanie Selden

Page 14: Fitchburg, Reservoir. Photo Credit: Alan Wynn, EEA

Page 15: Salisbury, Fisherman at Salisbury Marsh. Photo Credit: Bill Byrne, MassWildlife

Page 16: Bird-foot Violets. Photo Credit: Bill Byrne, MassWildlife

Page 17: Brewster, Quivett Marsh Vista Project. Photo Credit: Mark Robinson, The Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts

Page 18: Holyoke, Jones Ferry River Access Center. Photo Credit: Teresa Shepherd, Holyoke Parks and Recreation Department

Page 19: Amherst, Johnson Conservation Restriction. Photo Credit: Kestrel Trust

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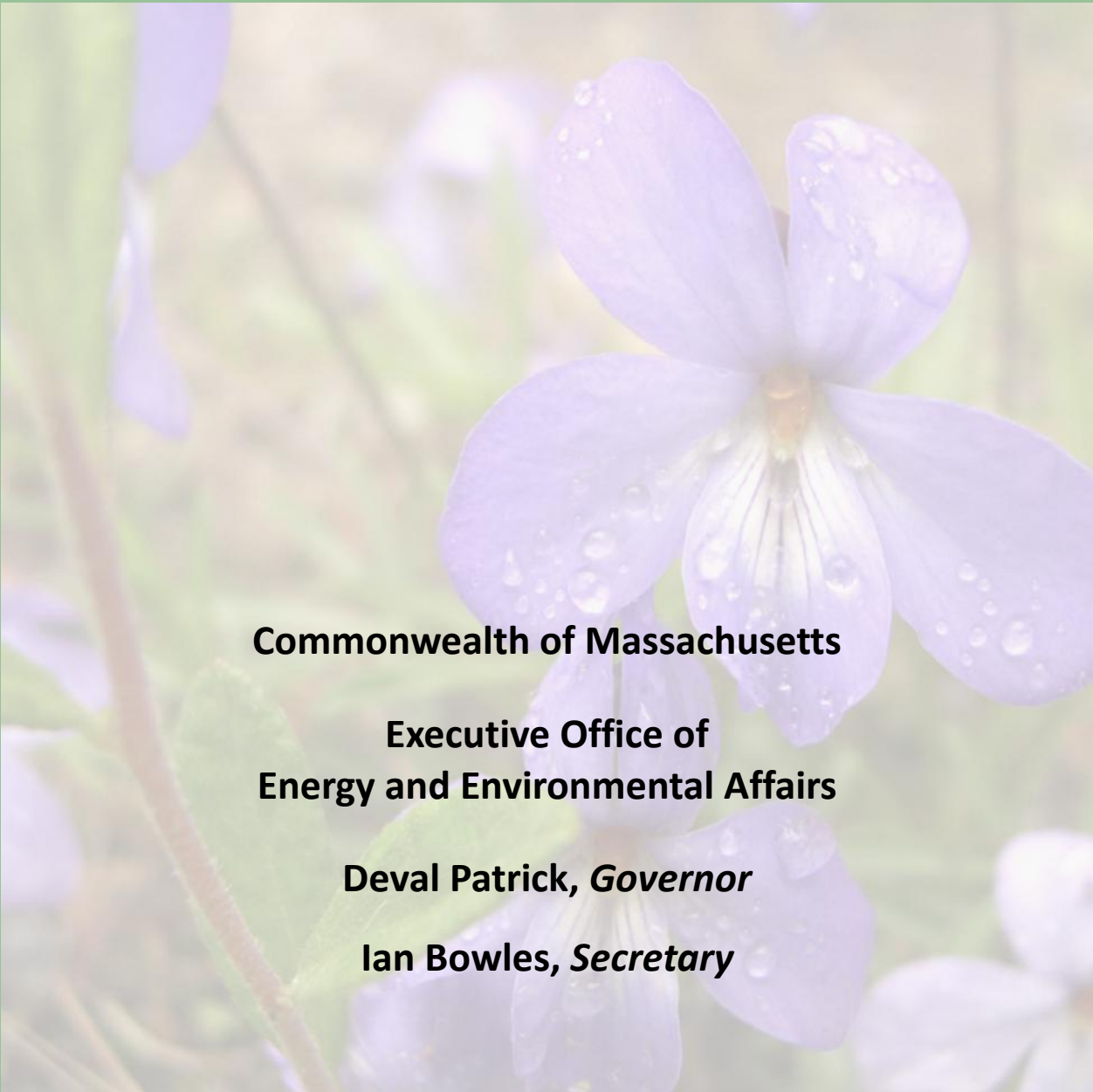
Layout and Design: Jane Pfister, EEA



## **Acknowledgments**

The Patrick Administration wishes to thank all who played a role in the conservation of 22,353 acres in 2009. This includes several dozen employees of EEA and the Departments of Agricultural Resources, Conservation and Recreation, Environmental Protection, and Fish and Game. In addition, the many employees and volunteers of the Commonwealth's land trusts and environmental organizations were indispensable partners in this accomplishment. Much of this land would not have been preserved without their efforts. Municipal governments and the many volunteers and staff responsible for their conservation efforts were also key participants. Finally, the Commonwealth is grateful to the many landowners across the state who donated property in 2009.





**Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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