

Pittsfield - October Mountain Complex Resource Management Plan



January 20, 2015; 6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
DCR West Region Headquarters



Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Governor

Charles D. Baker

Lieutenant Governor

Karyn Polito

Energy and Environmental Secretary

Matthew A. Beaton

Department of Conservation and Recreation Commissioner

John P. Murray

DCR Mission Statement



To protect, promote and enhance our common wealth of natural, cultural and recreational resources for the well being of all

Tonight's Meeting



- Presentation
- Background on DCR Resource Management Plans (RMPs)
- Pittsfield – October Mountain Complex Resource Management Plan
- Public Input

RMP Requirements

Management plans are prepared for “all reservations, parks, and forests under the management of the department”

M.G.L. Chapter 21; Section 2F



RMP Requirements



“shall include guidelines for the operation and land stewardship of reservations, parks and forests”

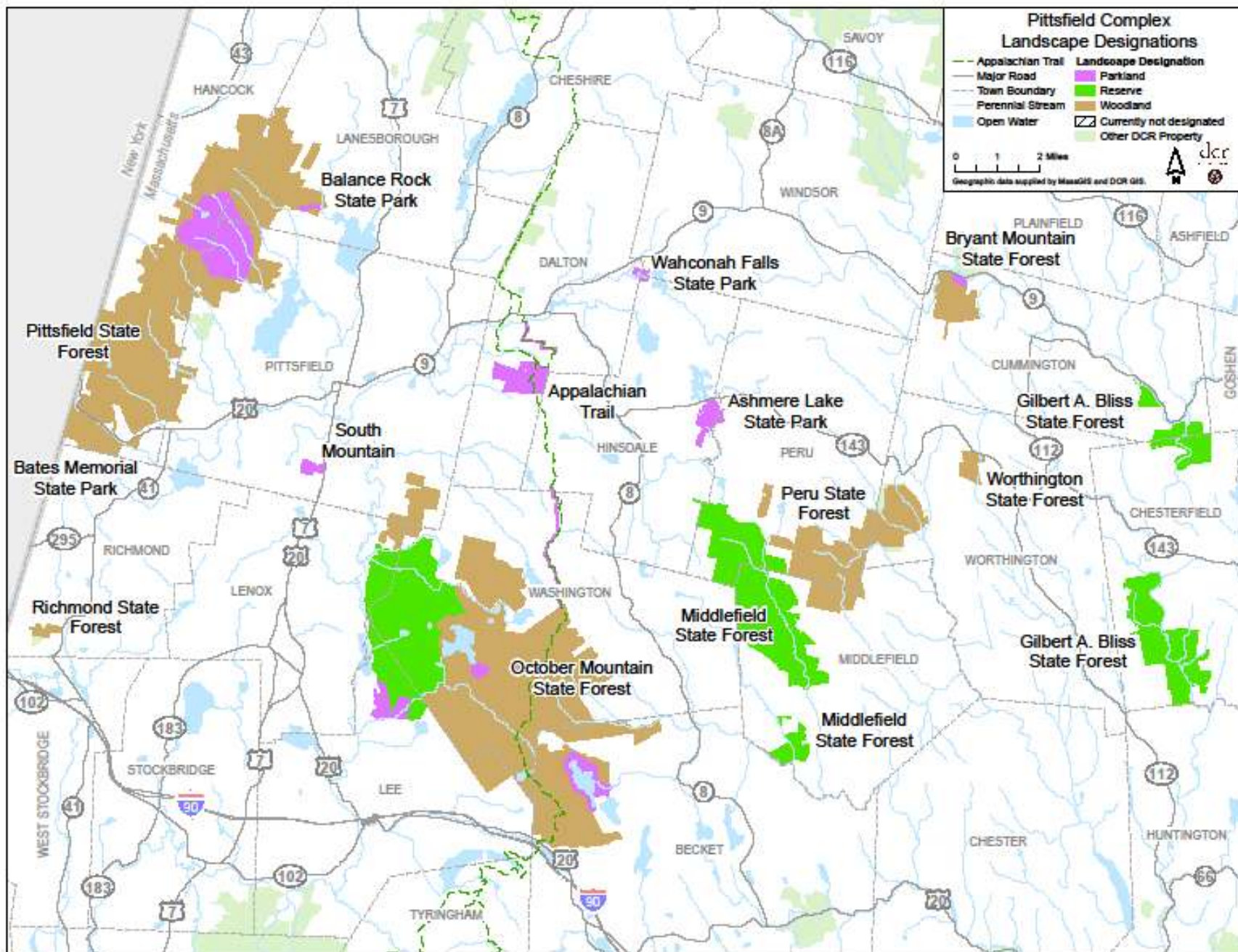
“shall provide for the protection and stewardship of natural and cultural resources”

“shall ensure consistency between recreation, resource protection and sustainable forest management”

M.G.L. Chapter 21; Section 2F

Resource Management Plans (RMPs)

- Are working documents that consider the past, present, and future of a property.
- Identify priorities for resource stewardship, regulatory compliance, and public health & safety.
- Provide a guide to the short and long-term management of DCR properties.
- Enhance communication and coordination with visitors, partners, and surrounding communities.



Landscape Designations & RMPs

Landscape Designation Management Guidelines → Land Stewardship Zones ↓	Reserve – <i>The least fragmented forested areas where ecological processes will predominate and inform management, and where commercial timber harvesting is not allowed.</i>	Woodland – <i>Forested areas actively managed for forest health, resource protection, sustainable production of timber, and recreation.</i>	Parkland – <i>Areas providing public recreation opportunities, connections to nature, and protection and appreciation of natural and cultural resources.</i>
Zone 1 – <i>Highly sensitive resources requiring special management approaches.</i>	Rare species habitat, natural communities, archaeological sites, or fragile cultural sites identified as being sensitive to / easily degraded by human activities.		
Zone 2 – <i>Resources that support recreational and management activities appropriate to the site.</i>	Large areas of natural vegetation and associated natural and cultural features, including rare species habitat, that is compatible with dispersed recreation.	Forest stands and associated natural and cultural features, compatible with dispersed recreation and active forest management intended to enhance species and age class diversity.	Stable / hardy natural and cultural landscapes, where a variety of outdoor recreation activities can be provided in a sustainable manner.
Zone 3 – <i>Intensive use areas such as recreational sites or maintenance areas.</i>	New zone 3s will not be established in Reserves. <u>Exception</u> – an RMP may identify existing intensive use areas missed during designation and not already captured in a Parklands designation area, in which case the application of a zone 3 may be considered.	Intensive recreation and park administration areas currently embedded within the forested landscape.	Areas that require regular maintenance by DCR staff, including altered landscapes in active use, intensive recreation areas, and park administration areas. Sites that may accommodate administrative or intensive recreation areas to meet future demands.

Pittsfield State Forest

- Located in Hancock, Pittsfield and Lanesborough.
- CCC camp 1934 – 1939.
- First state park interpretive program in Massachusetts – 1940.
Amphitheater constructed in 2005.
- State forest land acquired from 1924 through the current decade, now approximately 10,500 acres in size.
- Camping – 40 sites, picnicking, non-motorized boating & fishing, hunting, motorized and non-motorized trails.



Balance Rock State Park

- ~137 acres at the northern end of Pittsfield State Forest in Lanesborough, acquired in 1953.
- ~165-ton limestone boulder balanced on bedrock. Multiple use trails.



Bates Memorial State Park

- ~421 acres in Hancock at the southern end of Pittsfield State Forest.
- Donated in memory of Linden Wallace Bates, Jr., victim of the Lusitania.
- Deed restriction on original donation, protected as a wildlife sanctuary.



October Mountain State Forest

- Established in 1922, located in Lee, Becket, Washington, Lenox, & Pittsfield.
- Largest state forest in the DCR system, covering 16,323 acres.
- Three CCC camps associated with the state forest during the 1930s.
- Camping – 46 sites including 3 yurts, picnicking, boating & fishing, hunting, motorized and non-motorized trails



Wahconah Falls State Park

- 53 acres in Dalton, Hinsdale, Windsor
35-foot waterfall, picnic area and
adjoining trails.

Peru and Middlefield State Forests

- Located in Peru, Middlefield, Worthington
- Peru SF ~ 2760 acres, trails, hunting,
Garnet Hill scenic overlook, military
transport airplane crash site memorial.
- Middlefield SF ~3680 acres, trails,
hunting.
- Land acquisition began in the 1920s and
continued during the following 80 years.



Gilbert A. Bliss State Forest

- 2442 acres located in Chesterfield and Cummington.
- Contiguous with other conservation properties along the East Branch of the Westfield River: DFW, TTOR and USACE
- East Branch of Westfield River National Wild & Scenic River designation



Bryant Mt. State Forest

- 617 acres located in Cummington
- Formerly Berkshire Snow Basin, acquired by DCR in 1993



Ashmere Lake State Park

- 203-acre artificial lake located in Hinsdale, with public access boat ramp.
- Lake, dam and 3 islands became property of state in 1979, dam recently repaired.
- 15 private cottages on state land, by permit.



South Mountain

- ~70 acres at the southern end of the City of Pittsfield with 500-foot-wide conservation restriction along Route 20, includes DCR's West Region HQ.
- Deed restriction on vegetation management.



RMP Contents



- Existing Conditions
 - Natural Resources
 - Cultural Resources
 - Recreation Resources
 - Infrastructure
 - Management Resources and Practices



- Recommendations
 - Land Stewardship Zoning
 - Priority Management Recommendations

Time Frame*

Date	Action
January 20, 2015	RMP meeting followed by 30-day public comment period
January 21 – February 20	Public Comment Period
February & March, 2015	Trails workshops for Pittsfield and October Mountain State Forests
Summer 2015	2 nd public meeting on draft RMP followed by 30-day public comment period
Fall 2015	Review and approval by DCR Senior Staff and Stewardship Council
	* Dates subject to change

Trails Planning Workshops

- DCR & Trails Planning Advisory Group worked to identify trails management issues and assess trail conditions (2011 – 2012).
- DCR will host workshops for Pittsfield SF and October Mountain SF this winter.
- Trails Planning Process:
 - mapping & assess conditions
 - identify scenic, recreational & cultural destinations
 - identify constraints, issues & problem areas
 - identify desired experiences of trail user groups
 - coordinate with stakeholders and partners



Public Input



- Questions on RMP Process?
- Natural Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Recreation Resources
- Major Infrastructure
- Management Priorities
- Trails Plan Workshops



Additional Information

For more information:

<http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dcr/public-outreach/public-meetings/>

If you have comments or suggestions:

E-mail: dcr.updates@state.ma.us
Please put Pittsfield RMP in the subject line

Write: Department of Conservation and Recreation
Office of Public Outreach
251 Causeway Street, Suite 600
Boston, MA 02114

Call: 617-626-4974

***Note: Public comments submitted to DCR by email or letter
will be posted on the DCR website in their entirety***