



MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF
CONSERVATION AND RECREATION



Resource Management Plan (RMP): Belle Isle Marsh Reservation

February 4, 2026

View from the Observation Tower



Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Governor

Maura T. Healey

Lieutenant Governor

Kimberly Driscoll

Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary

Rebecca L. Tepper

Department of Conservation and Recreation Commissioner

Nicole LaChapelle

dcr
Massachusetts



DCR MISSION

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

DCR Core Principles

Our Core Principles:

Provide access to a diversity of outdoor recreational experiences & unique landscapes

that is equitable, inclusive, and welcoming



Conserve lands, water, and forests

by integrating science, research, and technical expertise into the management of our natural resources

Advance climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts

by implementing sustainable practices & advancing resiliency across our infrastructure, assets, & resources



Support healthy communities

by providing places for people to connect with nature and each other

Inspire generations of stewards

by recognizing and honoring our legacy through partnerships, public engagement, and education



Meeting Logistics



During the meeting:

- ▶ Use the Q&A feature – comments go to moderator
- ▶ Raise your hand using the Zoom function, and you will be given permissions to unmute and speak

After the meeting, through March 4th:

- ▶ DCR Public Comments
<https://www.mass.gov/forms/dcr-public-comments>

Please note that this public meeting is being recorded; the recording will be public record

Tonight's Meeting

- ▶ RMP Mandate and Required Elements
- ▶ Project Timeline
- ▶ Reservation RMP
 - ▶ Key Resources
 - ▶ Key Findings
- ▶ Public Comment



The Bennington Street Gateway

RMP Mandate



Kayaking offered through DCR's Universal Access Program

M.G.L. c. 21 § 2F

“The Commissioner of Conservation and Recreation shall submit management plans to the Stewardship Council with respect to all reservations, parks, and forests under the management of the department...”

Required Elements

Said management plans shall:

- Include guidelines for operation and land stewardship;
- Provide for the protection and stewardship of natural and cultural resources; and
- Ensure consistency among recreation, resource protection, and sustainable forest management



Banding juvenile osprey

Required Elements (continued)



304 CMR 7.02 (Management Plans & Massachusetts Wildlands):

Management planning process shall produce:

- ▶ Description of unique resources;
- ▶ Discussion of land's potential use;
- ▶ Land Stewardship Zoning analysis; and
- ▶ Action Recommendations

RMP Project Timeline

- ▶ Public meeting - November 13, 2024
- ▶ Drafting plan - 2024–2025
- ▶ Release of draft RMP - January 23rd, 2026
- ▶ Public meeting - February 4th, 2026
- ▶ Public Comment Period - through March 4th, 2026
- ▶ Presentation to Stewardship Council - April 19, 2026



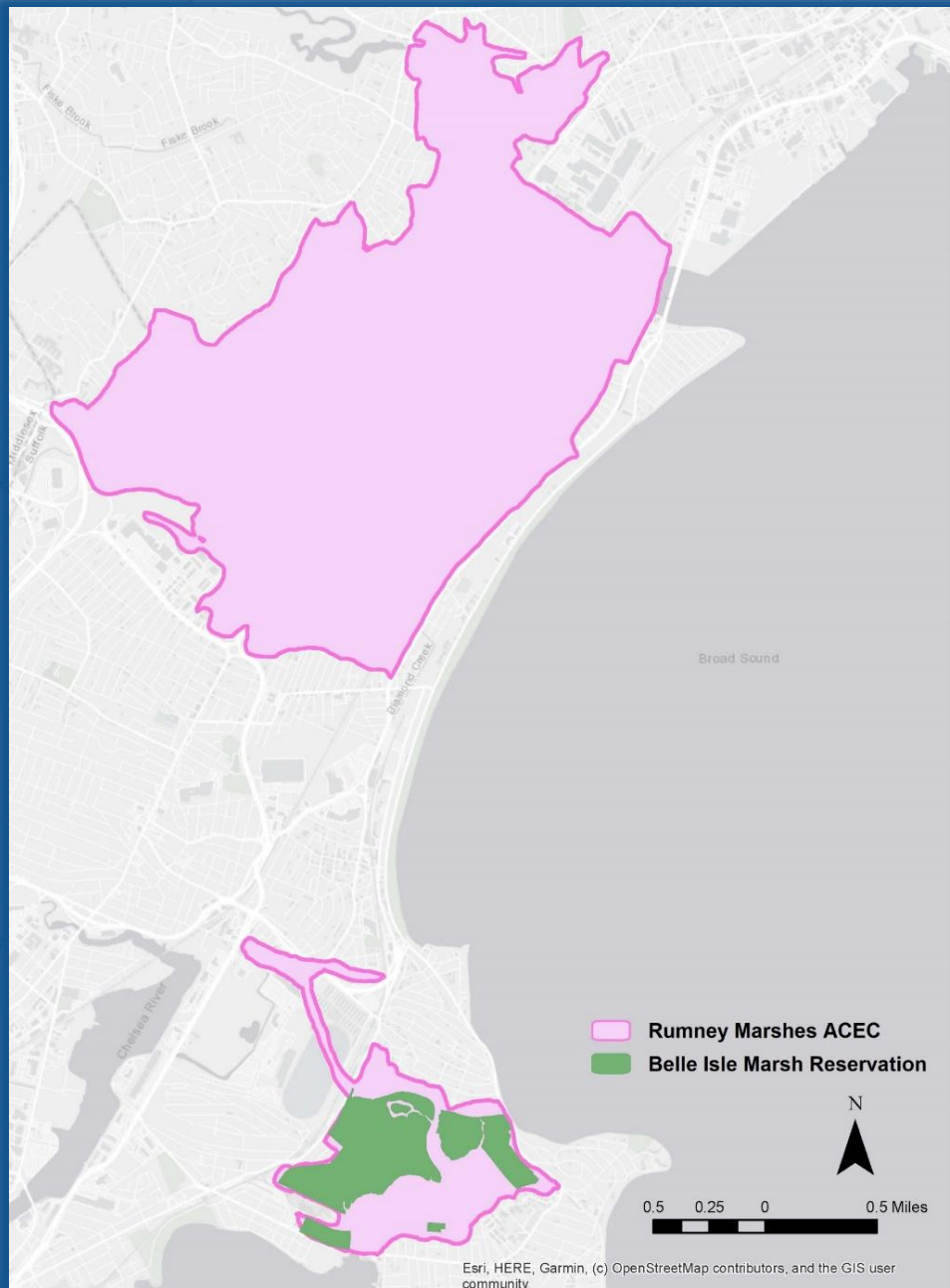
The Observation Tower

Broad Sound



- Belle Isle Marsh Reservation
- Municipal Property
- Municipal Boundary





Key Resources

Metric	Value
Area (acres)	225.4
Landscape Designation	Parkland (225.4 acres)
Rare Species	4 State; 0 Federal
Cultural Resources	0 total 0 on National Register
Recreation	Bicycling, road Dog walking, on leash Educational Programs Fishing Hiking/Walking Nature study/photography Picnicking Running/Jogging Scenic vista viewing Snowshoeing Wildlife viewing



Path around the meadow

Common Recommendations

- ▶ Resolution of potential encroachments
- ▶ Apply Landscape Designations to Reservation acreage currently lacking designations
- ▶ Conduct archaeological survey
- ▶ Trails: review, close unauthorized, update map
- ▶ Lack of required Land and Water Conservation Fund signs
- ▶ Limit depreciative behaviors (e.g., graffiti)
- ▶ Lack of accessibility (work currently in progress)
- ▶ Post DPH Fish Consumption Advisory posters



Reservation Kiosk

Natural Resources, Part 1



Multi-partner stewardship

- ▶ ACEC Resource Management Plan (different from DCR RMP)
- ▶ Barrier Beach Management Plan (E.O. 181, 1980)

Ownership and Easements

- ▶ Negotiate with City of Boston to acquire marsh parcel
- ▶ Work with DCAMM to complete of land transfer from City of Revere
- ▶ Identify instrument for Town of Winthrop sewer line

Natural Resources, Part 2



Channelized marsh inlet/outlet near Saratoga Street, East Boston

Marsh Health Impairments

- ▶ Restricted tidal flows dilute salinity
- ▶ Limited connection between marsh and inland watershed reduces sediment supply needed to grow marsh platform
- ▶ Berms and ditches alter hydrology
- ▶ Water quality impairments affect aquatic species
- ▶ During storms, large freshwater pulses from Long Pumping Station introduce contaminants and dilute salinity

Natural Resources, Part 3



Saltmarsh Sparrow

Saltmarsh and species habitat conservation

- ▶ Near-term projects (in progress)
 - ▶ Salt Marsh Adaptation & Resiliency Teams (SMARTeams): small-scale restoration / protection of marsh and salt marsh sparrow habitat
 - ▶ Invasives remediation: phragmites, Louise's swallowwort
- ▶ Long-term work (climate adaptation/resilience)
 - ▶ Study of Environmental Inventory concepts
 - ▶ Participation in regional / multi-partner and EEA salt marsh and sparrow protection efforts
 - ▶ Salt marsh sparrow studies (e.g. banding)
 - ▶ Possible use of Office of Coastal Zone Management ResilientCoasts voluntary buyout program

Natural Resources, Part 4



Public Climate Vulnerability & Adaptation

- ▶ Bennington Street (East Boston/Revere)
- ▶ Morton Street (Winthrop)
- ▶ Winthrop Parkway/Short Beach (Revere/Winthrop)

Private Development

- ▶ Suffolk Downs Redevelopment
- ▶ Bennington Street project

Recreation, Part 1



The main parking lot

Activity Review: research and public outreach effort

- ▶ **Dogs**
 - ▶ Leash non-compliance
 - ▶ Impacts to other recreationists
 - ▶ Impacts to natural resources such as protected birds and water quality
- ▶ **Bikes**
 - ▶ Ebikes
 - ▶ Multi-use paths concerns
 - ▶ Damage to accessible path

Recreation, Part 2



Enhancements

▶ Infrastructure

- ▶ Boundary guard rails and markers
- ▶ Tower, bridge, and boardwalk maintenance
- ▶ Shade at picnic area
- ▶ Dump Street entrance enhancements

▶ Sign Plan

- ▶ Welcome waysides
- ▶ Wayfinding from MBTA stops
- ▶ EJ Community accessibility & engagement
- ▶ Education, park regulations

▶ Interpretive plan (in progress)

Public Comment

General Guidelines

- ▶ Raise your virtual hand
- ▶ Please wait to be recognized by the moderator
- ▶ Please state:
 - ▶ Affiliation (if speaking on behalf of a group)
 - ▶ Property/Properties you are commenting on
- ▶ To assist us, please make comments in the context of what resources or issues DCR should address during the Resource Management Planning process.

Additional Information

- ▶ Draft RMP is available for review at:

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/draft-resource-management-plan-belle-isle-marsh-reservation>

- ▶ Recording and tonight's slide deck will be available at:

<https://www.mass.gov/dcr-public-meetings-information>

- ▶ If you have comments on this project:

- ▶ *Submit online:* <https://www.mass.gov/forms/dcr-public-comments>

- ▶ *Deadline: **March 4, 2026***

Please note: the contents of comments submitted to DCR, including your name, town and zip code, will be posted on DCR's website. Additional contact information provided, notably email address, will only be used for outreach on future updates to the subject project or property

- ▶ If you wish to subscribe to a DCR general information or project-related listserv: contact DCR's Office of Community Relations via email at mass.parks@mass.gov

Thank you!

