

**Update by Commissioner Leo Roy
Stewardship Council | Friday, March 1, 2019
Wompatuck State Park
Union Street, Hingham, MA, 02043**

Welcome and Brief History of Wompatuck State Park

- This unique state park, which was once the former Hingham Naval Ammunition Depot Annex, offers incredible natural landscapes and provides a much needed respite for individuals seeking to escape the hustle and bustle of city life.
- Importantly, there is a lot to see and do within Wompatuck, such as camping opportunities for people of all abilities to enjoy and an extensive trail system that the people of the region utilize every day. Other activities include biking, boating, fishing, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, birding, and more.
- We are very proud of this state park, and continue to ensure it remains accessible for individuals with disabilities, where we have focused on accessible camping, accessible restrooms, and accessible trails.

Public Meetings

- On Tuesday, February 19, the DCR hosted a public meeting to present design plans for the Paul Revere Park Playground Improvements Project. The playground is being built as part of the mitigation for the North Washington Street Bridge Project. The new playground's surface will be constructed of "poured-in-place" rubber and surrounded by new fencing with secure entrances. Existing benches will also be incorporated and the landscape will be restored. Additionally, playground equipment will be aimed at children from two years of age to twelve years old. If there aren't any unexpected delays, we hope to have construction begin in April 2019 with a completion anticipated for early summer.
- Also, on Wednesday, January 30, the agency hosted a public meeting to present, and obtain public input on, alternatives for the renovation of the Walden Pond State Reservation bathhouse, as well as alternatives for universally accessible connections between the Route 126 crosswalk and the bathhouse/main beach area. This iconic park that once inspired Henry David Thoreau continues to provide inspiration to visitors every single day. With the daily influx of people, particularly during the summer months, the DCR is in the process of making the park more accessible for all to enjoy. This includes addressing the bathhouse, the entry ramps, access to the beach, and an accessible trail to the site of Thoreau's cabin. While we are still a ways away from seeing construction, we are currently in the planning stages to ensure the Walden Pond remains a place for all to cherish.
- If you're interested in receiving information regarding these public meetings, please reach out to my office, and we can send you the materials previously presented.

Leadership Academy

- The DCR is once again coordinating its annual Leadership Academy, which enables agency employees from every region and division to come together for learning opportunities. This year, the Leadership Academy will focus on Climate Change and our role as leaders and stewards in planning for and adapting to changing conditions. This year's Leadership Academy will be held on Tuesday, April 9th, in the City of Leominster. This event continues to be a phenomenal success, and we anticipate another year of great participation from staff.

Park Serve Day

- I know I have previously informed this council before, but I wanted to take the time to remind you that also in April, the agency will be hosting its annual Park Serve Day event. This will be the thirteenth year for the statewide initiative, which was created as a day of volunteerism encouraging the public to partner with state government. Important tasks include cleaning coastlines, clearing trails, picking up litter, planting flowers, and more. Public participation has always been overwhelming, and we hope that you will be able to join us on Saturday, April 27, as we come together to clean and prepare local parks and beaches ahead of the summer recreational season.

February Vacation Week

- As you know, whenever there is a school vacation week, the DCR's visitor services increases programming for children and their families to take part in. The agency offered a wide ranging selection of programs that included guided hikes, wildlife observation opportunities, crafting activities, games, stories, and more. In total, 84 programs were offered in state parks across all five regions of Massachusetts with twelve visitor centers open and fully staffed.
- By offering these programs, we are trying to provide family-friendly adventures within the state parks system, while simultaneously fostering a great love of our natural world. We believe that if children come to our state parks at an early age and have fond memories, they will not only instill a love of nature in their kids, but will grow up and be excellent stewards of the Commonwealth's natural resources. With another school vacation coming around the corner in April, the agency will have more programs for children and families to enjoy.

Partnership Matching Funds Program

- And as stewards of the state parks system, we work with advocacy groups every day to share some of the work it takes to maintain local parks. In January, we announced \$990,582 in funding towards projects advocated by twenty-five municipalities, non-profits, and other entities, as part of the FY'19 Partnerships Matching Funds Program.
- This program provides critical funds for projects that improve the Commonwealth's natural, cultural, and recreational resources contained within the state parks system. These projects include trail improvements, ADA features, educational tools, and removal of invasive aquatic species. Every year, our partners work diligently with the agency to improve and enhance local state parks, and we are incredibly thankful for their dedication. If you'd like more information regarding these projects, please reach out to my office, and we will provide you with additional details.

Boston Harbor Islands Mooring Project Update

- It won't be long before we are enjoying the outdoor recreational season, where millions of people will be descending to state parks throughout the Commonwealth. With that, I am happy to note that the mooring project at the Boston Harbor Islands National and State Park is progressing. As you know, the DCR is installing an additional 118 transient moorings for boats up to 40 feet in size at various locations within the Boston Harbor Islands, including Spectacle Island, Georges Island, and Peddocks Island. The project is expected to be completed by summer 2019.

- Once all moorings are installed, reservations for day and overnight use can be made online for a fee. Designated temporary pickup and drop-off areas on the Spectacle, Georges and Peddocks piers will be available to boaters. With the addition of 118 moorings, visitors will be able to moor their boats and explore the natural, cultural, and historical resources the islands have to offer.
- With the increase in access to the islands, more visitors will be able to explore the rich cultural and historical components of the park relating to prehistoric use, resource extraction, trade and navigation, military history and coastal fortifications, institutions, and infrastructure. We are incredibly excited to provide these mooring for the boating community to utilize later this year.

Operations Regions Realignment and Staffing Changes

- Recently, we have made some changes to our Park Operations Team Roster. These changes were designed to fill some district manager vacancies and to better align recreational responsibilities amongst DCR regions.
- In the Central Region the Hopkinton Complex is moving to the Central Region, Central Valley District from the North Region. Metro West District Manager Kevin Hollenbeck will be the new Central Valley District Manager. Kevin has been the North Region Metro West District Manager since 2015. Kevin will join Regional Director Jenn Stowe and Central Highlands District Manager Dwayne Ericson.
- In the North Region District Manager Bill Cooksey has moved from the South Coast District in the South Region to head the new Middlesex District which includes the following complexes: Fells, Bradley Palmer and Walden. Christina Doctoroff will continue to manage the Coastal District. The North region will now have two districts – Middlesex and Coastal. The Metro West District no longer exists.
- In the South Region Susan Kane is being promoted to Assistant Regional Director and will assist Regional Director Karl Pastore with management of the South Region. For the interim term, Karl and Susan will cover the South Coast District until a replacement for Bill Cooksey has been named. Adrian Bandoni is now the permanent Cape Cod District Manager. We have also added a new Complex in the South Region, the Manuel Correllus Complex, which encompasses Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket.

Closing

- I would like to say thank you for your dedication to the DCR. Again, if you're interested in the materials provided at public meetings, or regarding projects receiving funds through the Partnerships Matching Funds Program, please do not hesitate in reaching out.
- I look forward to providing this council with another update next month on Tuesday, April 9, at the DCR Leadership Academy in the City of Leominster. Thank you so much and I hope that you're able to explore Wompatuck State Park.