



**Deputy Commissioner Geigis Talking Points
Stewardship Council | Friday, December 6, 2019
Fall River Heritage State Park | Davol Street, Fall River, MA 02119**

Welcome and Brief History of Fall River Heritage State Park

- Good morning, and welcome to Fall River Heritage State Park
- A beautiful urban park, Fall River Heritage is nestled at the estuary of the historic Quequechan and Taunton Rivers overlooking Battleship Cove and the Braga Bridge
- With its 3-acre meadow, mile-long boardwalk, boathouse, and visitor center, you can imagine the popularity of a state park such as this.
- Fall River Heritage State Park seeks to honor and share the story of a deeply historic city influenced by natural resources.
- The city built itself upon the earth's granite bedrock, along the remarkable 2-mile stretch of moving water and nine waterfalls which powered industries.
- Without such natural resources, Fall River would have never been named the country's leading cotton textile manufacturing center, or booming maritime hub.
- Today, from the park you can see Battleship Cove, a memorial to the rich maritime history of this city, and the boardwalk, a tribute to the hydro-power behind Fall River's industries.
- I encourage you to walk through the Visitor Center and view the two permanent exhibits showcasing this unique place.

Black Friday Hikes

- After Thanksgiving, the DCR hosted its annual, "Go Green on Black Friday" campaign.
- Nine state parks held guided hikes as an outdoor recreation alternative to the Black Friday shopping frenzy.
- We were delighted that over 221 visitors braved the cold to participate. That is more than double last year's visitation!
- The Baker-Polito Administration is proud to provide healthy, active recreational opportunities in the Autumn season—and throughout the year.
- Our DCR parks have increasingly become four-season destinations, as more people are taking advantage of our accessible and affordable offerings.

First Day Hikes

- Cold weather does not discourage outdoorsman and the like; active visitors continue to enjoy our parks for snow shoeing, skiing, winter hiking, and more.
- DCR will host its 29th annual First Day Hikes on January 1, a tradition that began at the Blue Hills Reservation more than 25 years ago.
- As is our tradition, we are inviting the public to start the new year in a DCR park – staff will lead guided hikes at 12 parks across the state.
- From hiking along mountain tops to traversing through forests, these events demonstrate that Massachusetts parks can be just as much fun in the winter as they are in the summer!
- This is will be the 9th year that the nation as a whole will hold First Day Hikes in all 50 states. The DCR is proud to share this wonderful Massachusetts tradition with the rest of the country.

Deer Hunt Updates

- In an effort to conduct best management practices upon agency owned land, DCR implements controlled deer hunts as part of land management plans.
- DCR is currently conducting a controlled hunting plan at the Blue Hills Reservation and the Quabbin Reservoir Watershed Lands.
- Permitted archery hunting at the Blue Hills concluded in the month of November; but, due to recent winter weather DCR canceled Day 1 of the shotgun hunt on Tuesday, December 3.
- Yesterday, day 2 of the shotgun hunt was conducted as scheduled and proceeded smoothly with 80 hunters selected to participate.
- On Monday, December 2 the Pelham Zone within the Quabbin Reservoir lands opened for a two week hunt, where 386 hunting permits were issued.
- The Petersham Zone 2-day hunt will take place on December 12 and 13, and the Wachusett Controlled Deer Hunt will occur from December 3 to 31.
- Notably, on November 8 DCR placed a moratorium on controlled deer hunt expansion into Quabbin Park located in Belchertown to allow for continued study of the issue.

- In spring 2020, DCR will continue to analyze the area, and if deer populations remain high, the agency will again consider opening Quabbin Park for a controlled deer management hunt.
- The DCR is committed to protecting, and enhancing the health of our parks, and continues to seek out best management practices.

Snow and Ice Prep + Two Day Storm

- I can say with certainty that the snow season is here! Mount Greylock Visitor Center saw 15 inches of snow on Monday alone!
- Ahead of the storm, staff engaged in lots of preparations to best equip our state parks, bike paths, and roadways.
- Each asset received a 90 point inspection and issues management as needed.
- Rest assured, throughout the winter season DCR will continue to work with all of our state and local partners to best serve each region of the commonwealth.
- The DCR snow and ice fleet is ready for the 2019/2020 season!

Borderland Ames Mansion

- If you have been to the movies or read the Boston Globe recently, you may have recognized a famous DCR property, the Ames Mansion at Borderland State Park.
- DCR works with production studios to utilize agency facilities, as part of DCR's mission to promote our common wealth of natural, cultural, historical resources.
- Two recent Hollywood films have been shot at the Ames Mansion, Ghost Busters, and Knives Out.
- The mansion is a popular location because of its preserved interior, maintained grounds, and security capabilities.
- The Charles River Reservation, Revere Beach, and Harald Parker State Forest are frequented by production studios, as well.
- It is a pleasure to showcase our facilities through Hollywood films and DCR is thrilled to continue the stewardship of our lands for all to enjoy, even through the camera lens.

DCR 2019 Highlights

- Lastly, I thought I would touch upon some of the agency's accomplishments in 2019.
- With the hard work of our staff and support from our partners, DCR;
 - Funded \$124 million in capital projects in various state parks across all regions of the state;
 - Planted 6,000 trees under the Greening the Gateway Cities Program in 14 cities;
 - Built 10 miles of new bike accommodations along agency managed roadways;
 - Leveraged \$1.3 million in private investment for the rehabilitation, management, and maintenance of 25 historic properties leased through the Historic Curatorship Program;
 - Funded \$9 million in maintenance and improvements projects at agency managed pools;
 - Funded \$9 million in reconstruction, repair, and maintenance projects at agency managed rinks; and,
 - Permanently protected 1,102 acres of land through the Land Acquisition Program.
- It has been a momentous year here at DCR, and I continue to encourage you to explore your local state park this holiday season.