Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation

Division of Water Supply Protection, Office of Watershed Management

Forest Management Project Proposal Summary for Public Comment

Location, goals, and summary of proposed forest management.

Proposal Summary Item	Item Information/Description
Lot Proposal ID	**PR-26-05**
Fiscal Year	2026
Watershed	Quabbin
Town(s)	New Salem
Forester	Derek Beard
Estimated Acres by Treatment Type	10 to 15 acres of regeneration openings. Openings will range in size from 0.5 to 2 acres.
Total Proposal Acres	71
Block	Prescott
Compartment and/or Working Unit	5
Location and Boundary Description	Located in the southwest part of the peninsula, the area sits a quarter mile north of intersection 17-11A on the west side of Newberry Road. It's bounded by Newberry Road to the east and north, steep slope and old woods road to the west and steep slope and intermittent brook to the south.
Previous Proposal?	No
Project Goals and Summary Description	The project is intended to increase structural diversity of this even age, tall mixed species forest. Establishing openings while leaving forested areas in between relatively undisturbed will create more diverse vertical and age structure than currently exists. It will also provide the light conditions necessary to establish and grow young trees of diverse species that will someday replace the current canopy. In short order (8 years), these openings are colonized by vigorous, hopefully diverse, young trees, bolstering forest resilience.

Forest Cover Types and Acreages

Overstory Forest Types	Acres
White Pine-Oak	36
Oak-Hardwood	15
Oak Mixed	7
Black Birch	6
White Pine- Hardwood	4
Northern Hardwoods	2

Understory Cover Types and Relative Importance

Understory Cover Type	**Relative area covered** (Dominant, Secondary, Minor, None)
Tree seedlings and saplings	Dominant
Mountain laurel	None

Understory Cover Type	Relative area covered (Dominant, Secondary, Minor, None)
Mesic site - witch hazel, highbush blueberry	Secondary
Dry site -Huckleberry, blueberry	Secondary
Mesic site - cinnamon fern, mixed hardwood	Minor
Hayscented fern	Minor
Invasive shrubs/vines	Secondary
Other	

Forest Vegetation Description

Vegetation Topic	Description
General Description, Forest Composition, Stand History, and Harvest History	Typical of most Quabbin watershed land, signs point to past agrarian property settlement, cellar holes, stone wall, wire fence and stone culverts. Once under public domain, most of the tilled land along North Sherer road was converted to softwood plantation (about 15 acres) that was largely (red pine) removed in the late 1990s. These acres now exhibit two-age structure composed of overstory white pine and mid-story black birch. The interior forest cover is composed of sawtimber size white pine/oak (40%), white pine/mixed hardwood (20%) and oak/hardwood (12%). Mesic areas have mostly red oak whereas black, scarlet and white oak dominate drier well drained locales. Black birch and red maple are the lion's share of the mixed hardwood component. The area's interior was thinned in the mid-1960s.
Advance Regeneration description	Understory is dominated by white pine (60%) followed by black birch. The smaller pine (seedling/small sapling size trees) is worthy of release. However, there are sizable areas of older, low vigor pine that have been developing in a suppressed condition and unworthy of release.
Terrestrial Invasive Plants description	An epicenter of invasives in and around an old farmstead include dense Japanese barberry and at least one sighting of bittersweet. A vigorous patch of false spirea (Sorbaria sorbifolia) was discovered to be dominating a clearing and spreading into the surrounding forest; it will be monitored and controlled if necessary.

Description of Wetland Resources Present

Resource Type	Description of resources present
Wetlands	Yes; deciduous forested wetland
Streams	Yes; all intermittent
Vernal pools	None known
Seeps	Yes

Description of Soils by Hydric Class

Soil Hydric Classes	% of area	Soil series and any further comments
Excessively Drained	0	
Well-drained Thin	25	Chatfield-Hollis complex, rocky
Well-drained thick	66	Canton-Chatfield-Hollis complex, rocky
Moderately well-drained	9	Scituate fine sandy loam, very stony
Poorly to very poorly drained	0	

Proposed Silvicultural Activities

Topic	Description
Site Selection and Silvicultural Objectives	Excluding the old plantation area, the forest has a tall uniform structure. Creating opportunities for regeneration, establishment and development of a new young forest age class of diverse species underpin area selection for silvicultural work. This is best achieved by creating regeneration openings.
Silviculture Prescription	Establishing regeneration openings should invite vigorous understory growth. Opening location would cover a gradient of sites; initially focusing on well drained locales. The harvest would regenerate about 10 to 15 acres of the proposal area with openings ranging between 0.5 and 2 acres in size.

Climate Change Considerations: DWSP has determined that the decision to implement this project is consistent with EEA climate goals and guidelines and agency land management objectives. Carbon and climate change considerations specific to the activities proposed for this project are discussed below.

Proposed Activity	Alignment of Activity with Climate Oriented Strategies and Recommendations
Patch Regeneration Harvest	Patch cutting is a regeneration technique that straddles the boundary between classic even-aged and uneven-aged forest management systems. Foresters select appropriate areas ('patches' or 'groups') covering a portion of the stand to harvest rather than removing the entire stand and then return periodically to repeat the process in other portions of the stand. In using patch cutting there is no final regeneration cut. Patch size and shape are determined by many different factors including overstory condition, desired species composition in the regeneration layer, other desirable herbaceous and woody vegetation, location, stand re-entry period, etc. Harvesting in patches aligns with many **climate-smart forestry practices**: • Increasing **structural diversity** improves resiliency by reducing the impact of age/size related disturbances. • Extending regeneration periods minimizes short term impacts to groundwater and nutrient cycling. • Partial stand overstory removals more closely align with **natural disturbance patterns**. • More **carbon is left on the landscape** for longer periods, and within-patch live tree, snag, and coarse debris retention allow for development of old forest characteristics. • Can also be used as opportunities to increase the stocking of **future climate adapted species, current climate imperiled species**, or other types of desirable vegetation.
General/other Climate Change Considerations	This silvicultural approach aims to increase forest resilience by improving structural and age-class diversity in a tall, even-aged mixed-species stand. The proposed silviculture is well-aligned with climate adaptation goals. Increasing structural complexity and promoting oak recruitment enhances resistance to wind damage, pests, and drought, all of which are projected to intensify with climate change. Retaining species like red and white oak improves future adaptability due to their tolerance of heat and variable moisture. The patch-based approach also buffers against stand-wide disturbances, ensuring greater ecological stability under uncertain future conditions.

Equipment and Access Constraints and Considerations

Constraint Topic	Description and Considerations
Proposed Equipment requirements	Likely cut-to-length harvest system
Proposed wetland or stream crossings	There are potentially 3 stream crossings using temporary skid bridges with corduroyed approaches. Crossing sites used in prior operations will be used but alternatives are available if these prove to be problematic due to degraded conditions.
Further wetland comments	No Wetlands will be crossed.
Vernal Pools	None known

Constraint Topic	Description and Considerations
Access improvements needed	North Sherer road will need work to restore tractor-trailer access. It was last used in this capacity in 1997. Side ditching and culvert clean out and/or replacement will be needed.
Other EQ issues	
In-kind Services	None
Other Access Concerns (parking, trails, etc.)	None

Subwatershed Analysis

Sub-Watershed number/name	Total DCR-owned acres in this sub-watershed	Acres regenerated on DCR land in the last 10 years in this sub-watershed	Total DCR-owned acres remaining for regenerating up to the 25% per 10 year limit for this sub-watershed	Acres in this sub-watershed that are part of this proposed lot
31	855	12	202	71

Additional comments on Subwatershed analysis: None

Wildlife and Habitat Observations and Considerations

Wildlife/Habitat	Observations and Considerations
Natural Heritage Priority Habitats?	Yes
State Listed species present:	NHESP has determined that certain state-listed sensitive species or habitats may exist within the lot proposal area. To protect them from unnecessary disturbance, detailed information regarding affected species and their locations is not included in this report. DWSP will coordinate with NHESP and follow recommendations to protect these species during the proposed activity.
Rare Natural Communities:	None known
General Wildlife Comments	Live and dead high value snags (trees 16” dbh or larger) will be retained for habitat.

Cultural Resources Description and proposed protection measures

Cultural Resource	Description and proposed protection measures
Historical features present; comments regarding protection	The area contains many features pointing to rich early euro-American settlement such as cellar holes, stone wall and stone culverts. Features will be flagged and avoided.
Description of site characteristics in relation to Ancient sites modeling or other verified evidence	The proposal area is approximately 500 feet up slope from the reservoir shoreline, significantly dropping odds of overlap with indigenous settlement locations. Surface stone and microtopography are moderate. Topographically, the area is mildly sloped.

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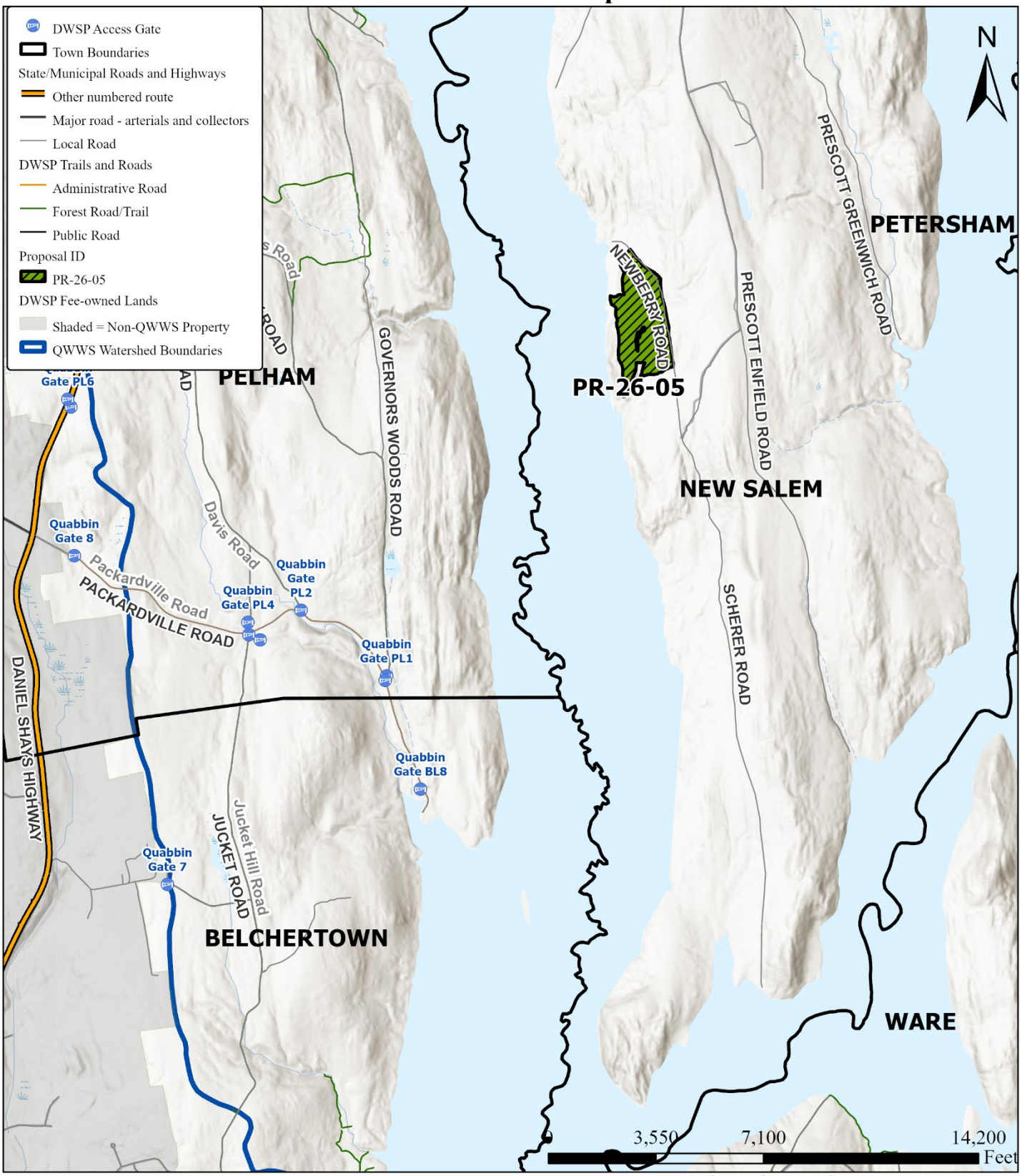
PR-26-05 -- Locus Map



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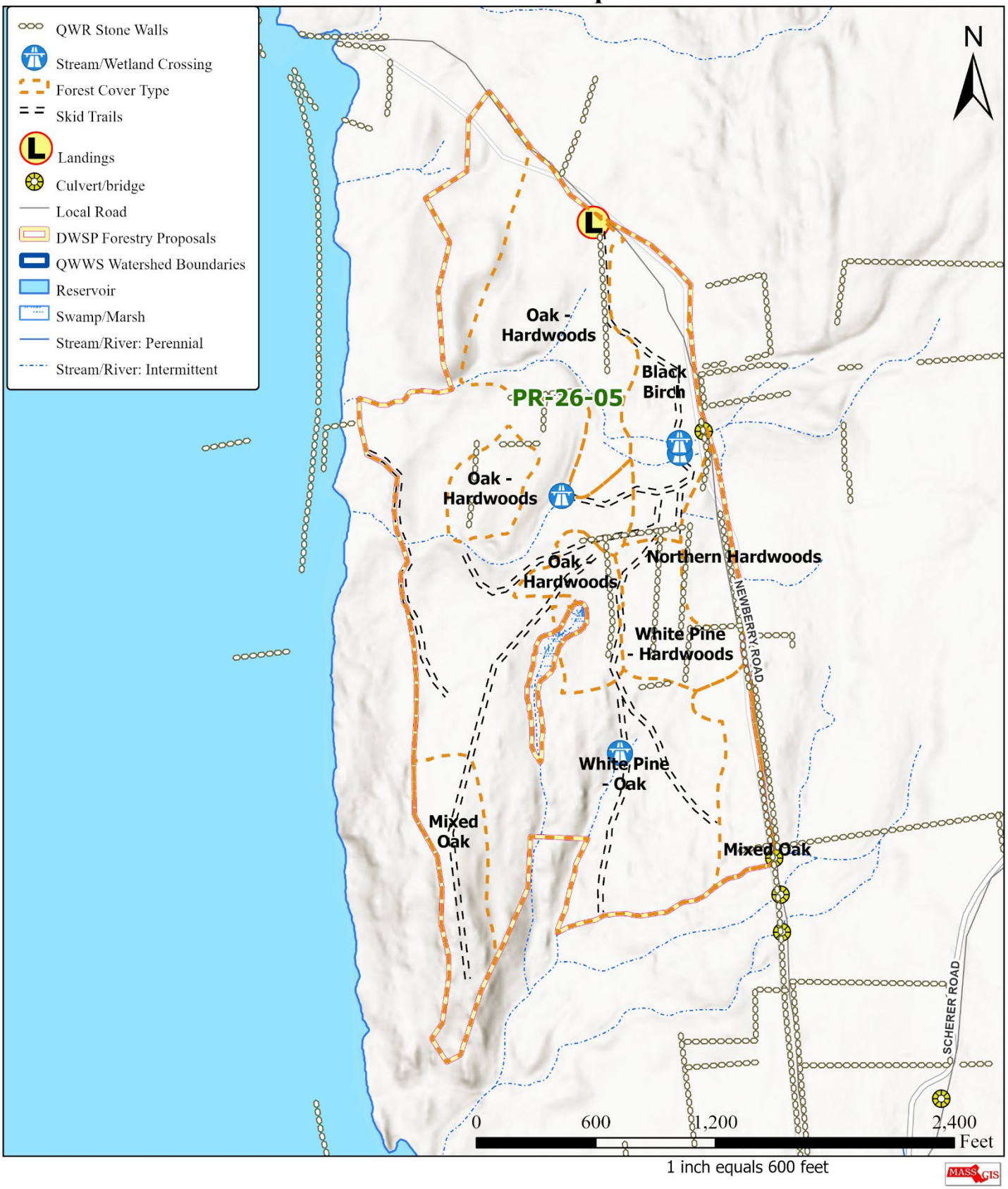
PR-26-05 -- Stand Map



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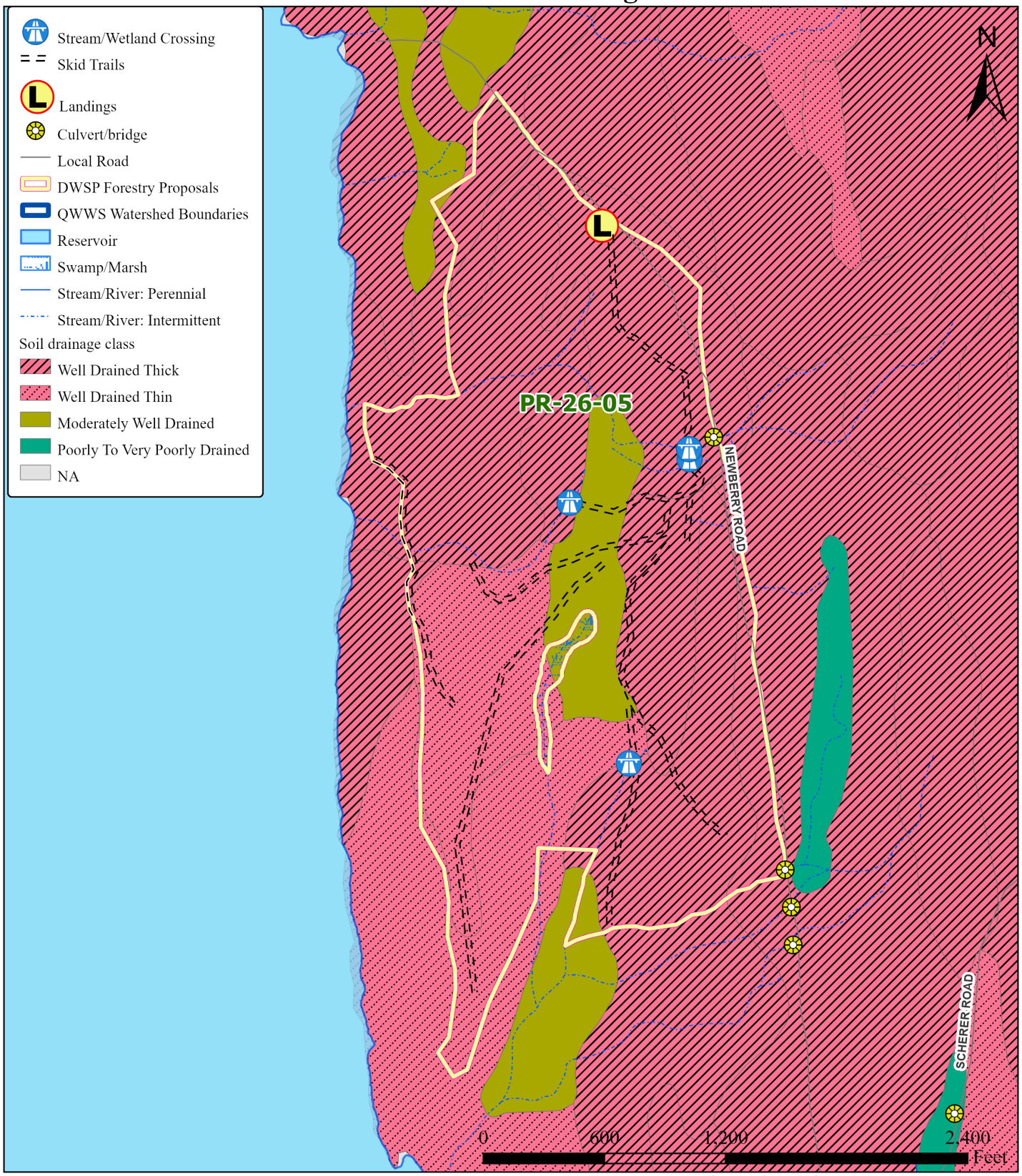
PR-26-05 -- Soil Drainage Classes



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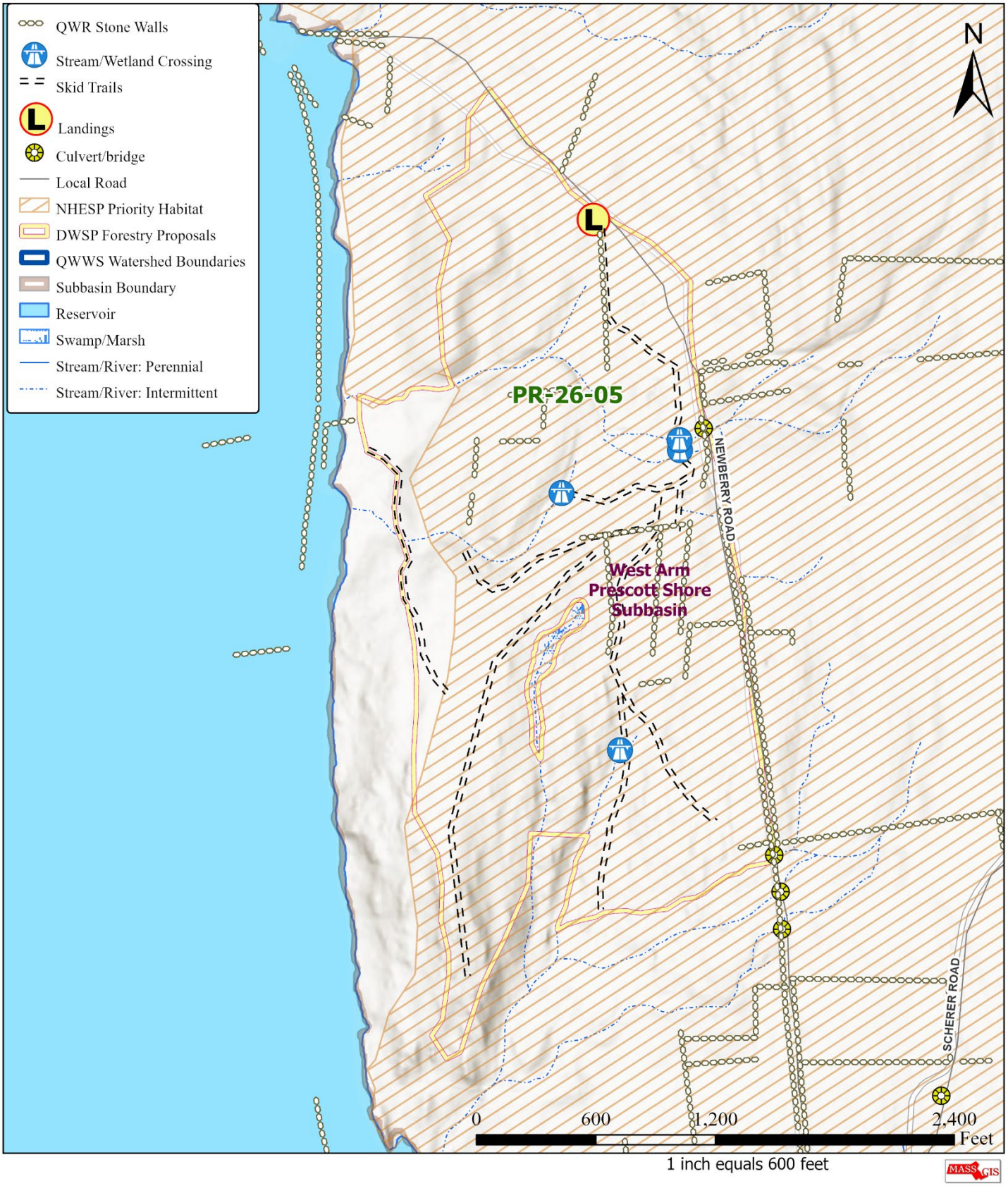
PR-26-05 -- Wetlands and Wildlife Resources



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PR-26-05 -- Cultural Resources and Landscape Characteristics