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	**WR-26-16**
Fiscal Year	2026
Watershed	Ware River
Town(s)	Oakham
Forester	Russ Wilmot
Estimated Acres by Treatment Type	15 acres in regeneration openings ranging in size from 0.1 to 2 acres. 5 acres in thinning between openings.
Total Proposal Acres	36
Block	n/a
Compartment and/or Working Unit	16
Location and Boundary Description	The proposal in Oakham is surrounded to the South, East and West by Army Corps land and a stonewall and stream to the North.
Previous Proposal?	No
Project Goals and Summary Description	The goal is to increase forest resilience by increasing vertical structure diversity while maintaining or improving the diversity of species composition across the landscape. The prescribed treatment will create openings full of young, diverse and vigorously growing forest by removing low vigor white pine and white oak.

Forest Cover Types and Acreages

Overstory Forest Types	Acres
White Pine - Oak	26.4
Mixed hardwood	1.5
Oak – hardwood	3.1

Understory Cover Types and Relative Importance

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

Forest Vegetation Description

Vegetation Topic	Description
General Description, Forest Composition, Stand History, and Harvest History	This site is characterized by low vigor single aged approximately one hundred year plus white pine and oak overstory with diverse regeneration in the understory. 48 plots were taken in this proposal area. The overstory is comprised of a mostly white pine-oak stand (81% of the plots taken) containing white pine, red oak, white oak and red maple with small amounts of hemlock, hickory and black cherry. The understory consists of white oak, red oak, red maple and white pine seedlings and saplings. Interrupted fern, clubmoss, wintergreen, and pockets of sheep laurel are also present.
Advance Regeneration description	Regeneration surveys showed predominately diverse regeneration (73% of plots taken) with white oak, red oak and white pine regeneration on almost all plots taken. There is abundant viable regeneration present.
Terrestrial Invasive Plants description	No invasives recorded or noted in this proposal area.

Description of Wetland Resources Present

Resource Type	Description of resources present
Wetlands	There is a small wetland in the middle of the proposal area.
Streams	There is one intermittent stream flowing out of the wetland within the proposal area. There is one stream immediately North of the proposal area that is perennial and will need to be bridged to access the proposed landing.
Vernal pools	None known.
Seeps	None known.

Description of Soils by Hydric Class

Soil Hydric Classes	% of area	Soil series and any further comments
Excessively Drained	0	
Well-drained Thin	0	
Well-drained thick	66	Montauk-Scituate-Canton, Montauk-Canton
Moderately well-drained	26	Woodbridge -Paxton Association
Poorly to very poorly drained	8	Ridgebury Whitman Association

Proposed Silvicultural Activities

Topic	Description
Site Selection and Silvicultural Objectives	This site was selected because of its lack of age and vertical structure in the overstory stand. The overstory white pine is overcrowded and dying (~live BA 110-180) and the crowns for the most part have less than 20% live crown ratio. The mature oaks are fading out and dying from Spongy moth defoliation in 2019. There is abundant diverse regeneration present throughout the proposal area.
Silviculture Prescription	Regeneration openings will be established totaling approximately 15 acres. The regeneration openings will be between 0.1 - 2.0 acres in size averaging about one acre. Since regeneration is abundant, openings will be focused in locations buffered from streams, following along stonewalls and wetlands to avoid crossing/disturbing them where possible while also considering the topography and looking for overstory that is in the poorest condition. An additional five acres will be thinned around the openings to increase sunlight into the openings by targeting dying and previously damaged trees.

General Climate Change Considerations:

This silvicultural approach aims to enhance forest resilience by increasing vertical structure diversity and maintaining or improving species composition across the landscape. This approach is designed to mimic natural disturbance processes while responding to climate-related and ecological stressors affecting this single-aged, declining overstory. The proposal silviculture reduces vulnerability by distributing age and species diversity more evenly across the 36-acre management unit. Younger, mixed-species cohorts are better equipped to withstand future stressors such as drought, wind, pests, and disease. Increasing species diversity reduces risk, ensuring that no single pest or climate event is likely to compromise the entire unit.

DWSP has determined that the decision to implement this project is consistent with EEA climate goals and guidelines and agency land management objectives. 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
Full overstory removal, partial stand, patch regeneration cut. **(see page 2, Silvicultural Prescription)**	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.

Proposed Activity	Alignment of Activity with Climate Oriented Strategies and Recommendations
Diffuse overstory removal, partial cut, mid-rotation thinning **(see page 2, Silvicultural Prescription)**	Classic thinnings are partial cuts implemented during the 'middle years' of stand development ('intermediate treatments') to **adjust species composition**, shift growth towards desirable and more vigorous trees, and maintain desired density and stocking levels. Stands may be thinned multiple times prior to initiating the regeneration phase near the end of a planned rotation. Time intervals between thinnings are generally considerations between rotation lengths and the response of the trees on the site. Climate-smart practices that agency foresters keep in mind when conducting thinnings include: • **Retaining higher residual densities** that maintain higher levels of carbon stocks on the landscape. • Retaining better-formed and more vigorous individuals which will improve **carbon sequestration capacity**. • Taking the opportunity to favor **desired species**, especially those species that are better adapted to **future climate scenarios**.
Additional Comments	

Equipment and Access Constraints and Considerations

Constraint Topic	Description and Considerations
Proposed Equipment requirements	None.
Proposed wetland or stream crossings	One perennial stream that is North of the proposal area will need to be crossed. Bridge mats will be required. Another potential intermittent stream crossing is within the proposal area. No wetland crossings are required.
Further wetland comments	There is a small wetland in the proposal area that will not have harvesting in it and currently has blowdown from windstorms.
Vernal Pools	None known.
Access improvements needed	None.
Other EQ issues	None.
In-kind Services	None.
Other Access Concerns (parking, trails, etc.)	No trails or parking areas. Area is surrounded on three sides by land of the Army Corps of Engineers.

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
Parker	2746	0	687	20

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Ware	2815	0	704	11

Additional comments on Subwatershed analysis:

Wildlife and Habitat Observations and Considerations

Wildlife/Habitat	Observations and Considerations
Natural Heritage Priority Habitats?	None.
State Listed species present:	None known.
Rare Natural Communities:	None known.
General Wildlife Comments	Moose and deer presence. Regeneration surveys showed moderate browse level.

Cultural Resources Description and proposed protection measures

Cultural Resource	Description and proposed protection measures
Historical features present; comments regarding protection	Stonewalls are present and will be avoided and protected as much as possible. Three to four walls will need to be crossed to access the entirety of the lot and to avoid crossing a stream. The walls are low to the ground and not substantial. If possible, crossings will occur where the walls are in the poorest condition, and protected following the recommendations of the archaeologist.
Description of site characteristics in relation to Ancient sites modeling or other verified evidence	The proposal area is flat for the most part with steep slopes in the southern portion. An intermittent stream runs through the lot. No other evidence found.

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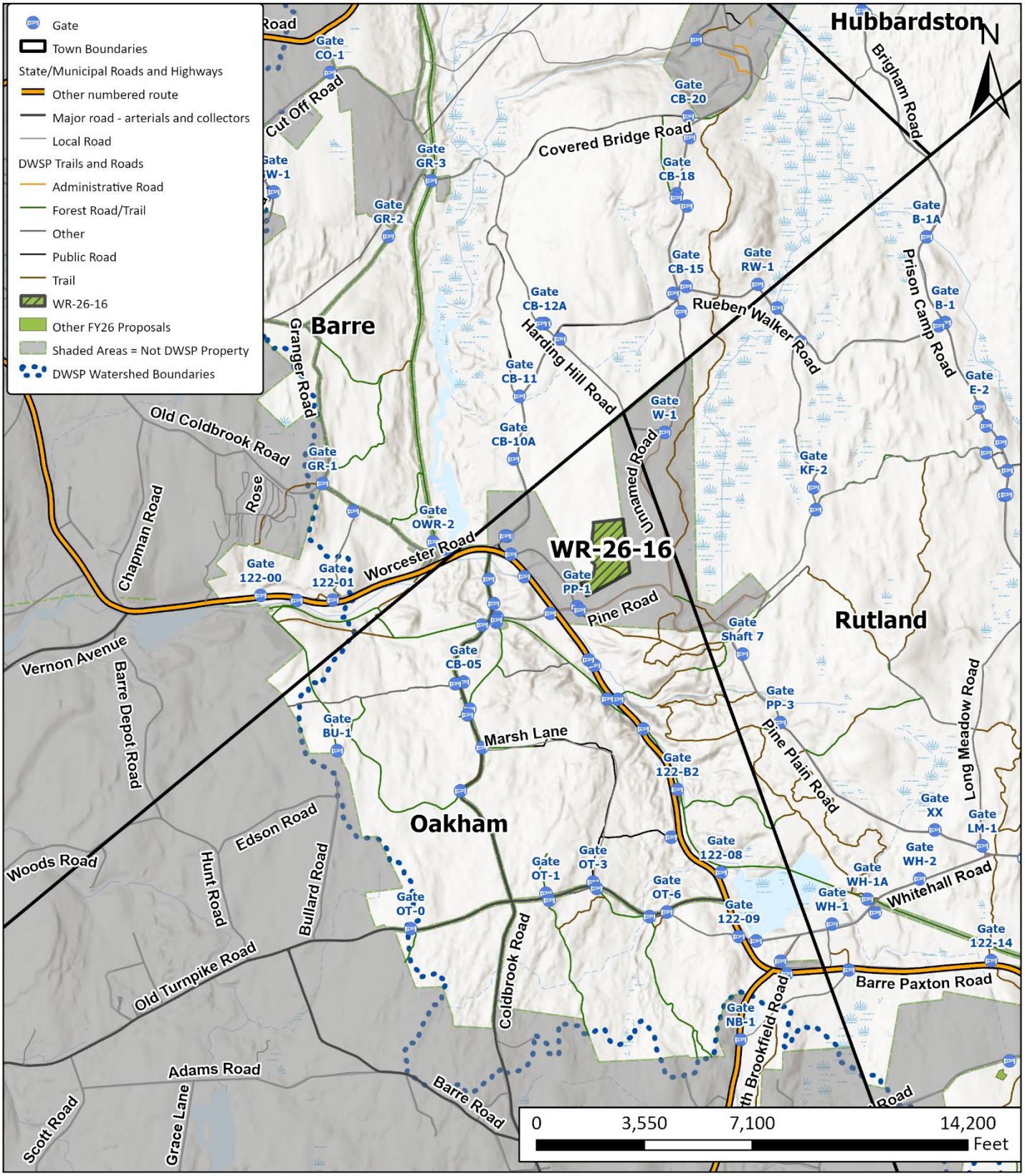
WR-26-16 -- Locus Map



1 inch equals 4,000 feet

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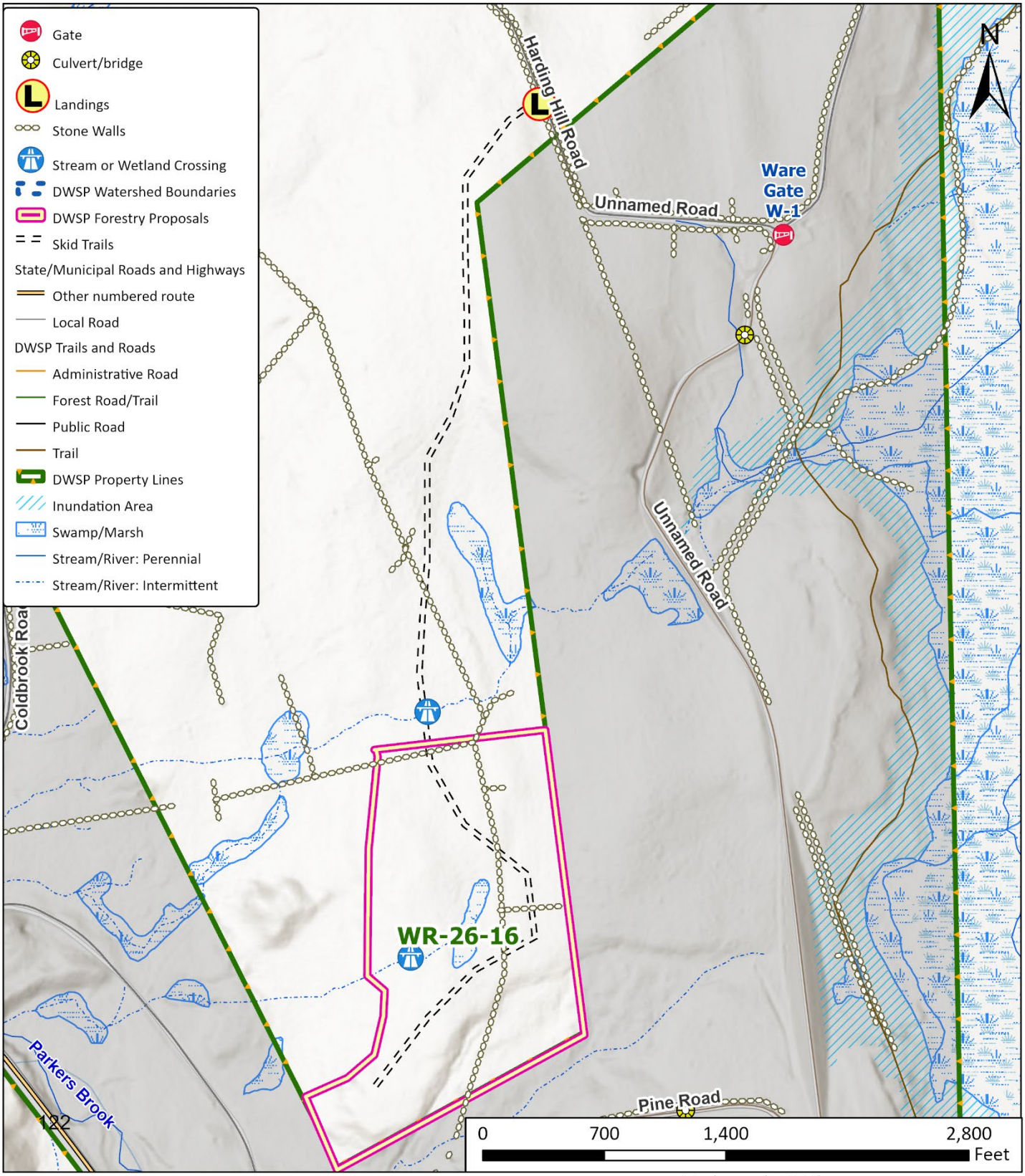
WR-26-16 -- Access and Landing Map



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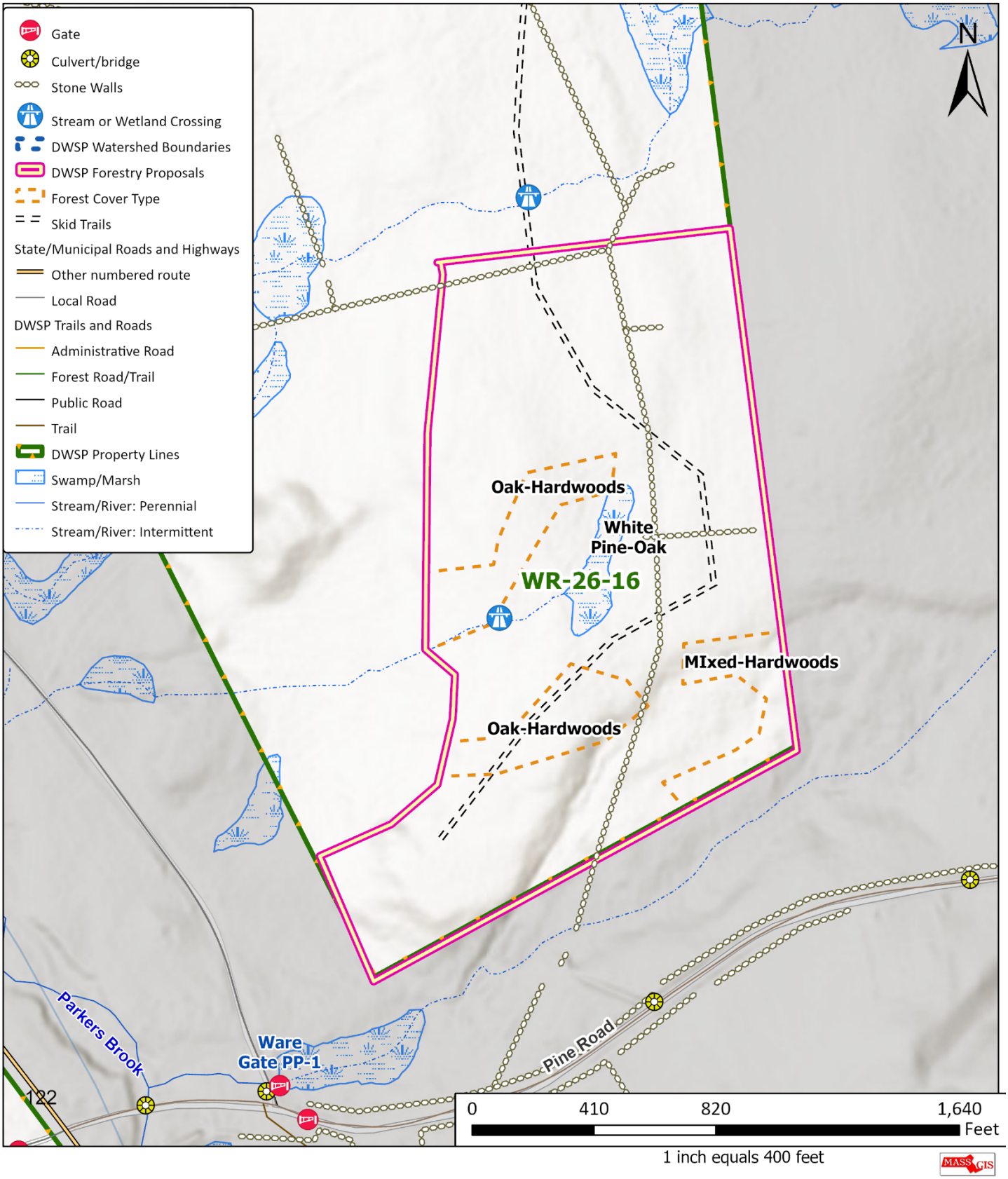
WR-26-16 -- Stand Map



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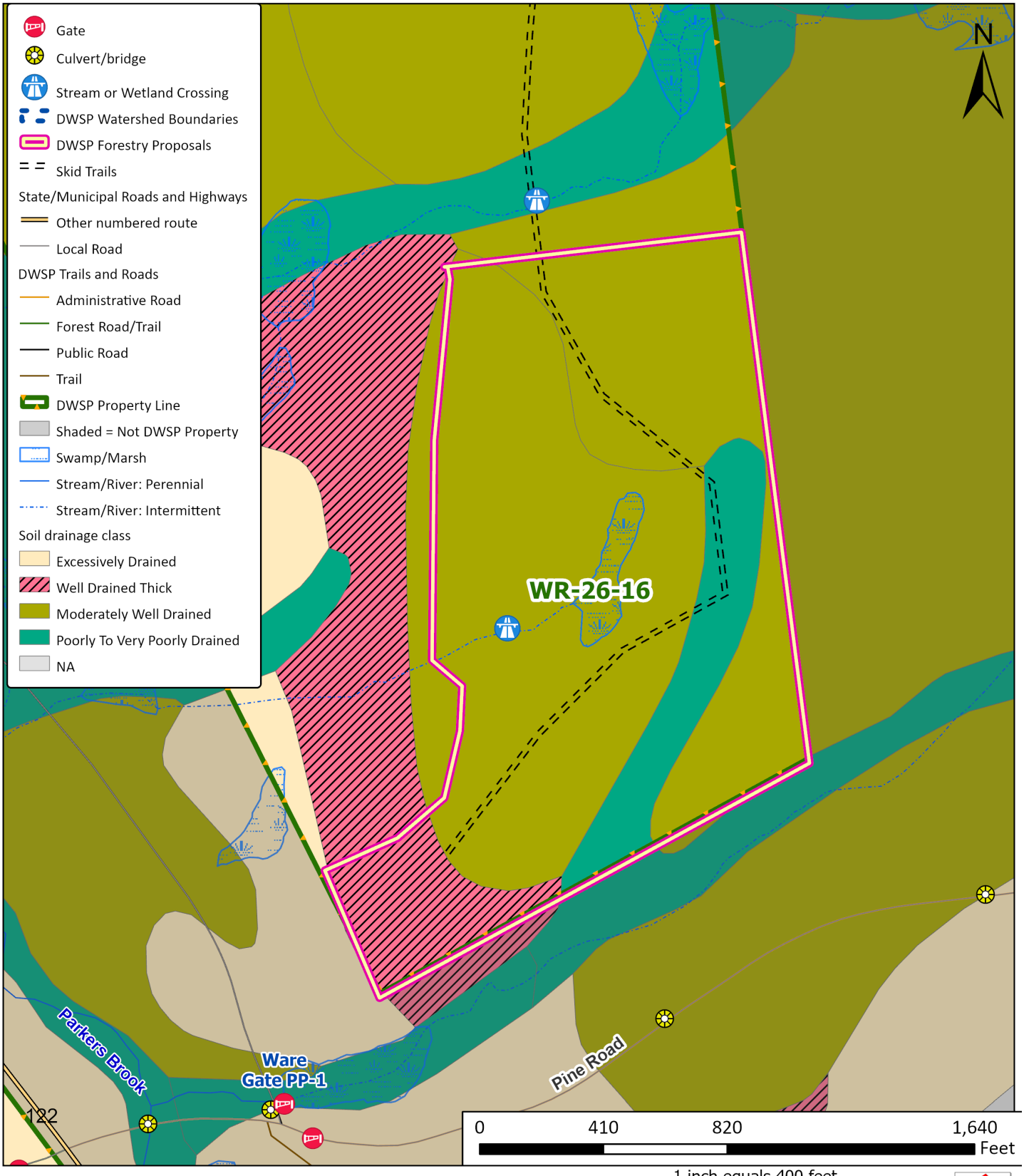
WR-26-16 -- Soil Drainage Classes



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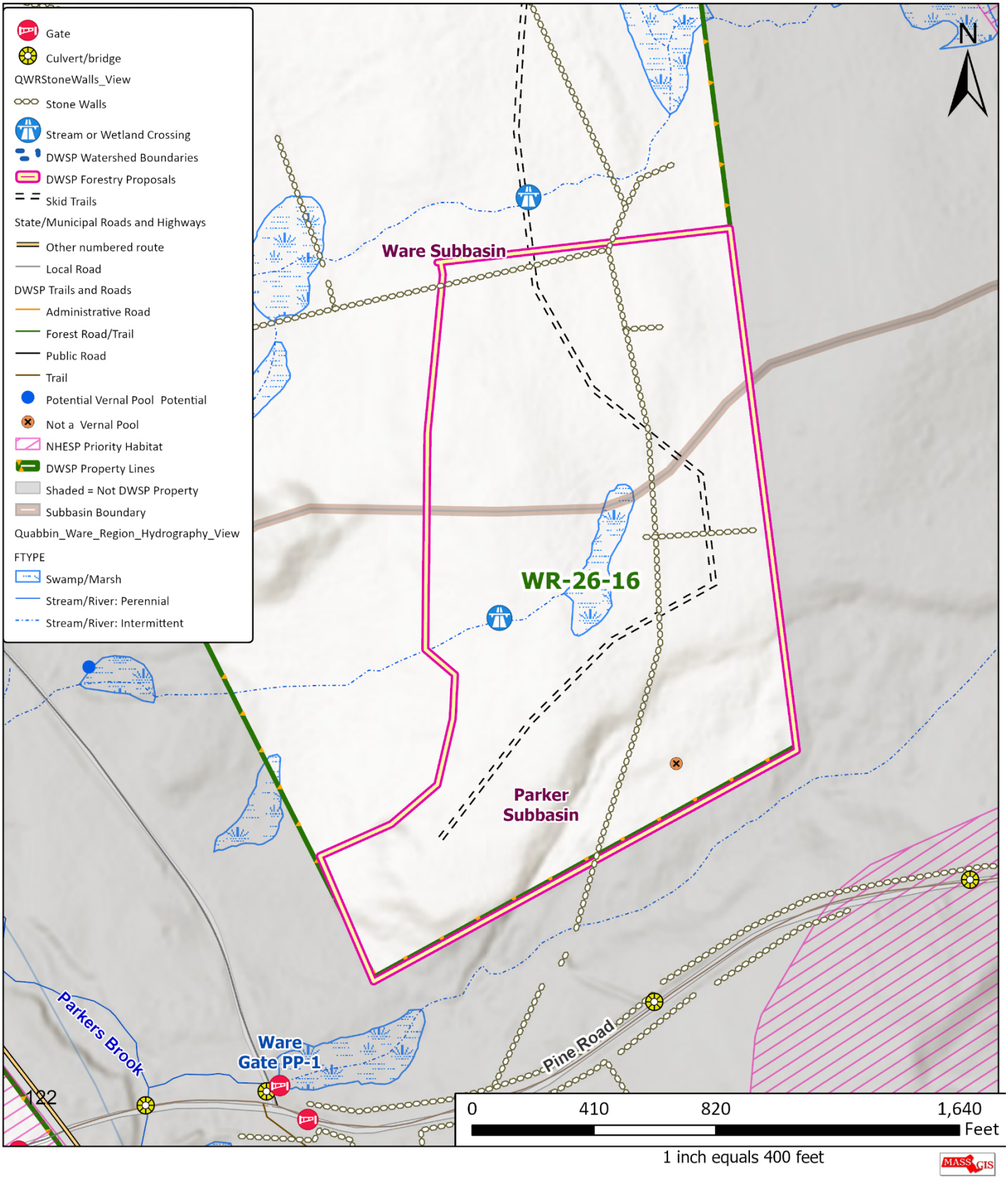
WR-26-16 -- Wetlands and Wildlife Resources



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WR-26-16 -- Cultural Resources and Landscape Characteristics