



MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF  
CONSERVATION AND RECREATION



# Erving Complex Resource Management Plans (RMPs) September 18, 2025



# 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 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

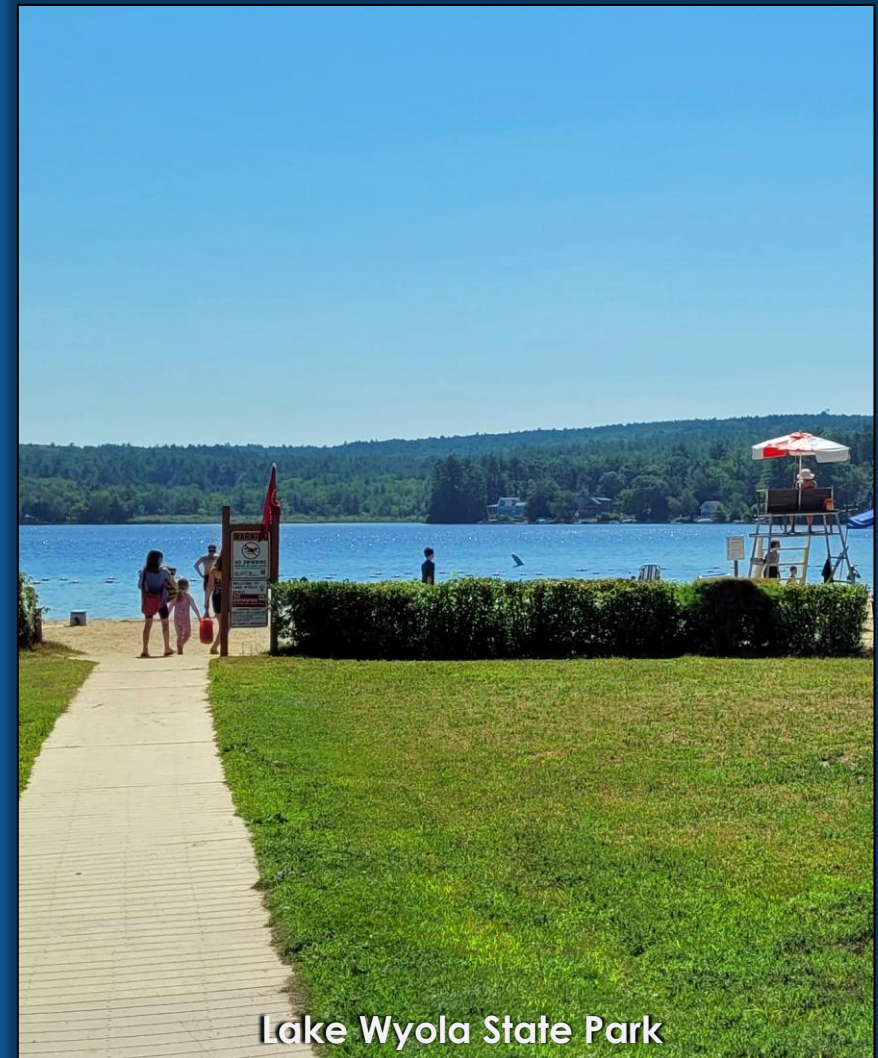
After the meeting, through October 18th:

- ▶ 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
- ▶ Erving Complex Overview
- ▶ Project Timeline
- ▶ Erving Complex RMPs
  - ▶ Key Resources
  - ▶ Key Findings
- ▶ Public Comment



# RMP Mandate



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



# Required Elements (continued)

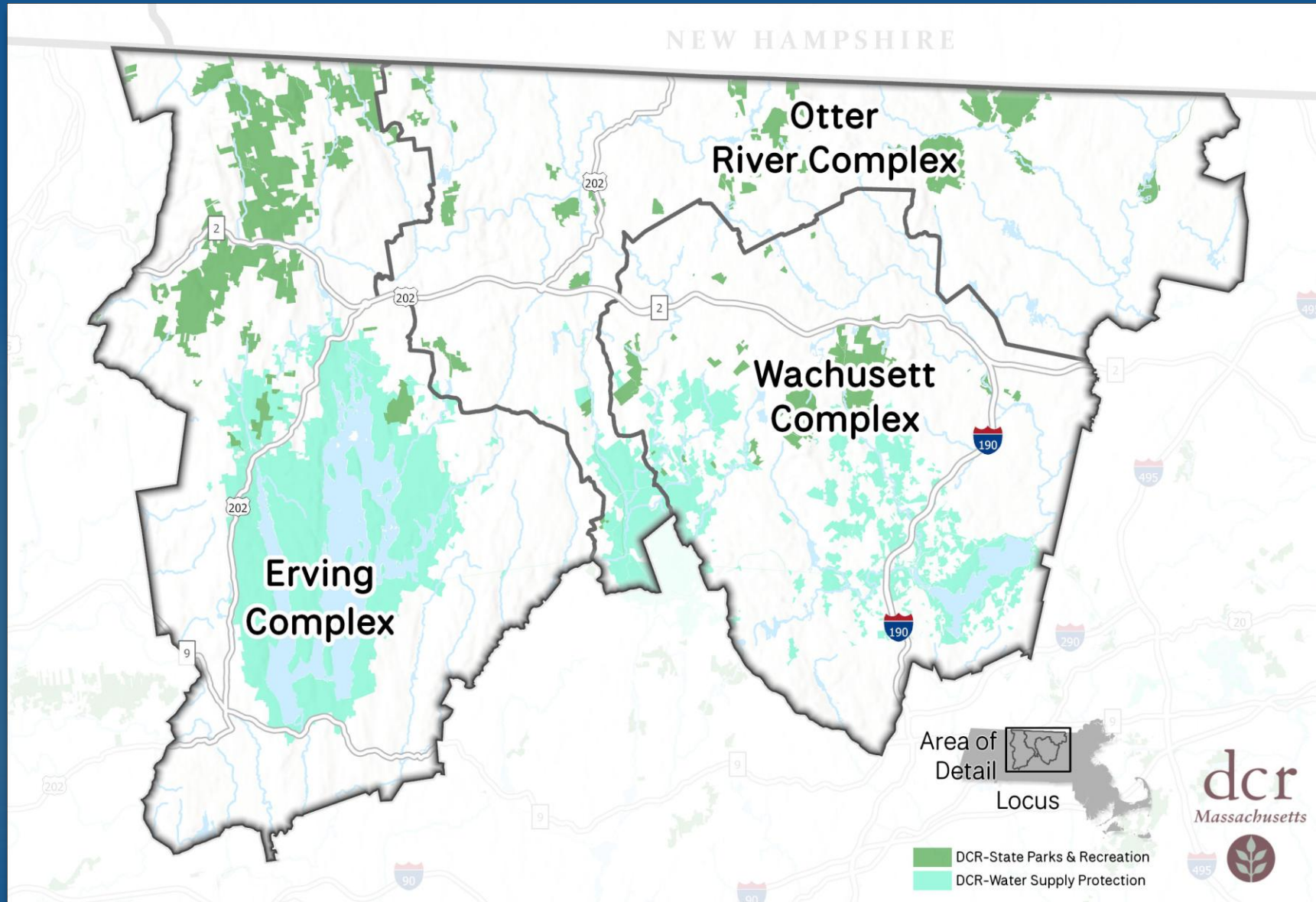


304 CMR 7.02 (Management Plans & Massachusetts Wildlands):

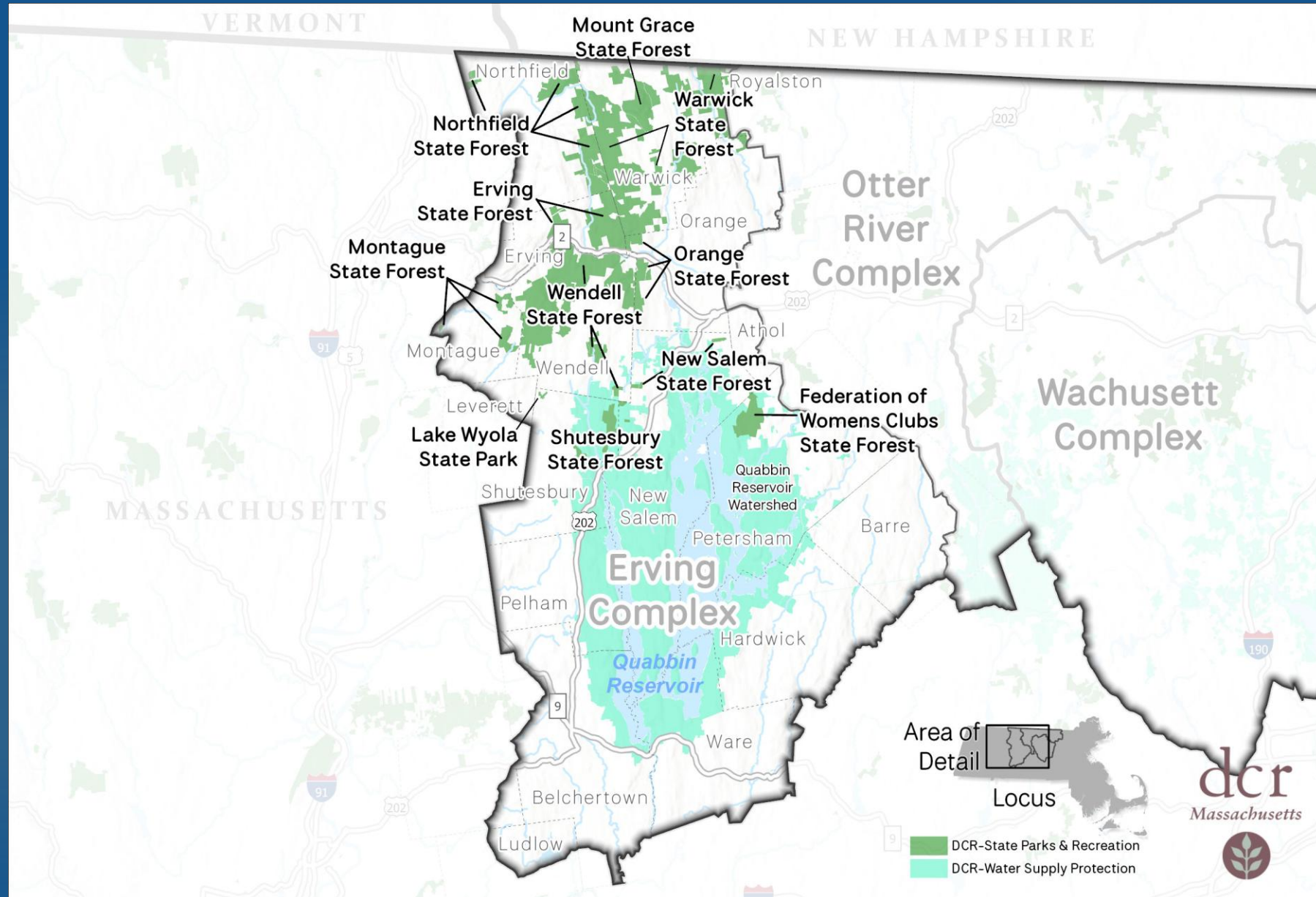
Management planning process shall produce:

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

# Central Highlands District

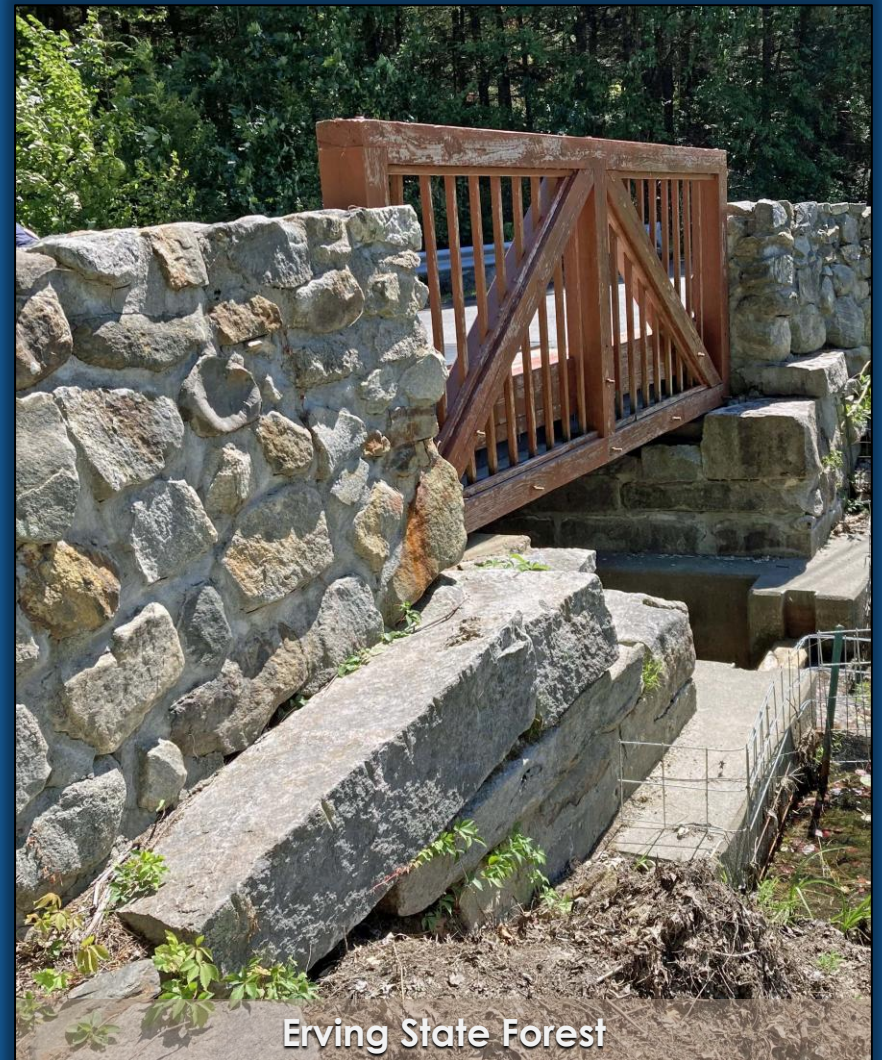


# Erving Complex



# Erving Complex RMPs - Project Timeline

- ▶ Public meeting (for entire Central Highlands District) - June 2022
- ▶ Drafting plans - 2022–2024
- ▶ Release of draft RMPs - September 10<sup>th</sup>
- ▶ Public meeting – September 18<sup>th</sup>
- ▶ Public Comment Period - through October 18th, 2025
- ▶ Presentation to Stewardship Council - November 2025



# Common Recommendations



- ▶ Apply Landscape Designations to portions of property lacking such designations
- ▶ Conduct an archaeological reconnaissance survey
- ▶ Create a trail map
- ▶ Establish a DCR web page
- ▶ Establish a gateway area with parking, Identification Sign, Welcome Wayside, and kiosk
- ▶ Implement key recommendations from Program Accessibility Assessment
- ▶ Implement measures to curb unauthorized Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) use
- ▶ Implement recommendations from Central Region Invasive Plant Mgt. Plan
- ▶ Resolve potential encroachments
- ▶ Resolve trail-related threats and opportunities in accordance with Trail Guidelines and Best Practices
- ▶ Survey, document, and submit documentation to certify potential vernal pools in NHESP habitat of MESA-protected vernal pool obligate species or in Woodlands
- ▶ Work with Geocaching community to ensure that caches located in sensitive natural and cultural resources are relocated
- ▶ Work with Indigenous partners to inventory, document, conserve, and interpret Indigenous resources and Indigenous history within the Forest/Park

# Erving State Forest: Key Resources

| Metric                | Value                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Area (acres)          | 3,154.2                                                                                                                                                    |
| Landscape Designation | Parkland (233.2 acres)<br>Reserve (594.8 acres)<br>Woodland (2,189.8 acres)<br>No Designation (136.4 acres)                                                |
| Rare Species          | 5 State; 0 Federal                                                                                                                                         |
| Cultural Resources    | 9 total<br>0 on National Register                                                                                                                          |
| Recreation            | Bicycling, mountain<br>Boating<br>Camping<br>Fishing<br>Hiking/Walking<br>Horseback riding<br>Hunting<br>Picnicking<br>Snowmobiling<br>Swimming/Sunbathing |



# Erving State Forest: Key Findings



- ▶ Laurel Lake Recreation Area is a popular, regionally significant, recreation resource
- ▶ New England Trail (a National Scenic Trail) passes through the Forest
- ▶ 42 Priority Recommendations, including:
  - ▶ Multiple recommendations related to protecting water quality at Laurel Lake for the benefit of rare plants, recreation, and ecological health
  - ▶ Multiple recommendations related to the Hermit's Castle, a natural rock outcrop that was historically modified for shelter by a 19<sup>th</sup>-century recluse
  - ▶ Survey and protection of Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) resources

# Federation of Women's Clubs State Forest: Key Resources

| Metric                | Value                                                                                                                 |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Area (acres)          | 1,006.4                                                                                                               |
| Landscape Designation | Woodland (960.0 acres)<br>No Designation (46.4 acres)                                                                 |
| Rare Species          | 4 State; 0 Federal                                                                                                    |
| Cultural Resources    | 3 total<br>0 on National Register                                                                                     |
| Recreation            | Bicycling, mountain<br>Camping<br>Fishing<br>Hiking/Walking<br>Hunting<br>Snowshoeing<br>Trapping<br>Wildlife viewing |



# Federation of Women's Clubs State Forest: Key Findings



- ▶ Walk-in campsites are uncommon in DCR system and offer a more secluded camping experience
- ▶ 9 Priority Recommendations, including:
  - ▶ As appropriate, update the Forest name to "Federation of Women's Clubs State Forest" where the name is incorrect on print and electronic publications, and signs
  - ▶ Increase the presence of Environmental Police Officers (EPOs), DCR Rangers, and Forest operations staff, as appropriate and available, in areas with high OHV use
  - ▶ Work with the Town of Petersham to determine ownership of West Street and State Forest Road

# Lake Wyola State Park: Key Resources

| Metric                | Value                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Area (acres)          | 41.9                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Landscape Designation | Parkland (41.9 acres)                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Rare Species          | 1 State; 0 Federal                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Cultural Resources    | 10 total<br>0 on National Register                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Recreation            | Boating, non-motorized<br>Canoeing/Kayaking<br>Dog walking, on leash<br>Fishing<br>Hiking/Walking<br>Nature study/Photography<br>Picnicking<br>Skiing, cross-country<br>Snowmobiling<br>Swimming/Sunbathing<br>Wildlife viewing<br>Volleyball |



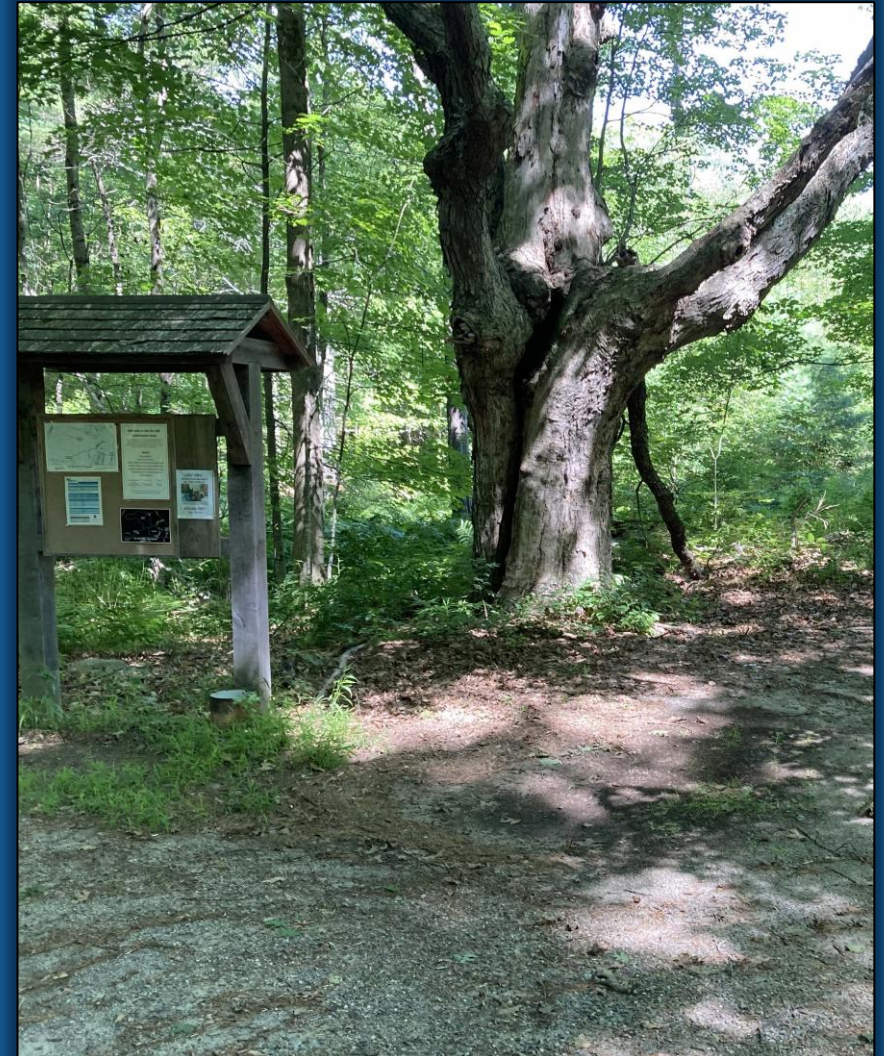
# Lake Wyola State Park: Key Findings



- ▶ Carroll Homes Recreation Area includes beach, picnic area, and bathhouse
- ▶ Ripley-Ames House is home to a population of state-listed bats
- ▶ New England Trail passes through the Park
- ▶ 27 Priority Recommendations, including:
  - ▶ Protecting conservation and recreation values by enhancing landscape connectivity between the Park and Wendell State Forest
  - ▶ Continuing to monitor bats
  - ▶ Several recommendations related to preservation of Ripley-Ames House
  - ▶ Partner with Town and, if necessary, MassDOT, on design and installation of traffic calming and/or pedestrian crossing infrastructure

# Montague State Forest: Key Resources

| Metric                | Value                                                                                         |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Area (acres)          | 685.5                                                                                         |
| Landscape Designation | Woodland (619.9 acres)<br>No Designation (65.9 acres)                                         |
| Rare Species          | 7 State; 0 Federal                                                                            |
| Cultural Resources    | 1 total<br>0 on National Register                                                             |
| Recreation            | Dog walking on leash<br>Hiking/Walking<br>Mountain biking<br>Snowmobiling<br>Wildlife viewing |



# Montague State Forest: Key Findings



- ▶ Connects to Wendell State Forest, Montague and Montague Plains WMAs, and Town of Montague Water Supply Land
- ▶ 13 Priority Recommendations, including:
  - ▶ Continue to coordinate habitat management activities and wildfire fuels mitigation on Montague Plains Tract
  - ▶ Work with utility line easement holders to install gates on their rights of way
  - ▶ Partner with the Town of Montague to:
    - ▶ Update signage and clarify OHV use on state land at trailheads and on the town website
    - ▶ Install Forest related content at the Town's kiosks on Dry Hill Road

# Mount Grace State Forest: Key Resources

| Metric                | Value                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Area (acres)          | 1,578.1                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Landscape Designation | Parkland (84.7 acres)<br>Woodland (1,489.2 acres)<br>No Designation (4.2 acres)                                                                                                                                            |
| Rare Species          | 1 State; 0 Federal                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Cultural Resources    | 7 total<br>0 on National Register                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Recreation            | Biking, mountain<br>Dog walking, on-leash<br>Hiking/Walking<br>Hunting<br>Nature study/Photography<br>Scenic vista viewing<br>Skiing, cross country<br>Sledding, tubing<br>Snowmobiling<br>Snowshoeing<br>Wildlife viewing |



# Mount Grace State Forest: Key Findings



- ▶ State Forest established via special legislation
- ▶ New England Trail passes through the Forest
- ▶ 8 Priority Recommendations, including:
  - ▶ Replace existing privy near summit with conforming system
  - ▶ Research plaque missing from summit of Mount Grace. If sufficient archival materials exist, recreate and install the plaque
  - ▶ Manage vegetation in cellar holes and stone walls in accordance with BMPs
  - ▶ Coordinate with Warwick Highway Department and MassDOT, as appropriate, to install Trail Crossing signs where the New England Trail crosses Northfield Road and Winchester Road

# New Salem State Forest: Key Resources

| Metric                | Value                                                               |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Area (acres)          | 126.6                                                               |
| Landscape Designation | Woodland (126.6 acres)                                              |
| Rare Species          | 1 State; 0 Federal                                                  |
| Cultural Resources    | 0 total<br>0 on National Register                                   |
| Recreation            | Dog walking, on leash<br>Hunting<br>Snowshoeing<br>Wildlife viewing |



# New Salem State Forest: Key Findings



- ▶ Both tracts abut Division of Water Supply Protection (DWSP) lands and other protected open space
- ▶ 6 Priority Management Recommendations, including:
  - ▶ Post Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) Fish Consumption Advisory posters at fishing access locations along Lake Rohunta at the Blackinton Road Tract
  - ▶ Install an Identification Sign at each tract

# Northfield State Forest: Key Resources

| Metric                | Value                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Area (acres)          | 3,549.8                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Landscape Designation | Woodland (2,110.3 acres)<br>No Designation (1,515.7 acres)                                                                                                              |
| Rare Species          | 6 State; 0 Federal                                                                                                                                                      |
| Cultural Resources    | 4 total<br>0 on National Register                                                                                                                                       |
| Recreation            | Bicycling, mountain<br>Dog walking, off-leash area<br>Hiking/Walking<br>Horseback riding<br>Nature study/Photography<br>Snowshoeing<br>Snowmobiling<br>Wildlife Viewing |



# Northfield State Forest: Key Findings



- ▶ Views from Garnett Hill and Notch Mountain Overlook attract visitors looking for expansive views
- ▶ New England Trail passes through the Forest
- ▶ 16 Priority Recommendations, including:
  - ▶ Develop and implement a management plan for the Hickory-Hop Hornbeam Forest/Woodland and Sugar Maple – Oak – Hickory Woodland priority natural communities near Notch Mountain Overlook
  - ▶ Post interpretive and/or regulatory signs at access points to Level Bog informing visitors of the sensitive nature of these wetlands and requesting that they stay off the wetland mats
  - ▶ Manage vegetation at Garnett Rock Overlook to maintain views for visitors

# Orange State Forest: Key Resources

| Metric                | Value                                                                     |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Area (acres)          | 738.4                                                                     |
| Landscape Designation | Reserve (671.7acres)<br>No Designation (140.0 acres)                      |
| Rare Species          | 1 State; 0 Federal                                                        |
| Cultural Resources    | 0 total<br>0 on National Register                                         |
| Recreation            | Hiking/Walking<br>Hunting<br>Nature study/Photography<br>Wildlife viewing |



# Orange State Forest: Key Findings



- ▶ Due to a near absence of recreation infrastructure and low levels of visitation, the Forest's natural and cultural resources are believed to remain relatively undisturbed
- ▶ 8 Priority Recommendations, including:
  - ▶ Conduct natural resources surveys prior to creation, expansion, or improvement of any trails
  - ▶ Inventory, document, conserve, and interpret post-Contact historic features within the Forest
  - ▶ Following completion of natural and cultural resources surveys, revisit LSZ and adjust as needed to reflect new information on the Forest's resources
  - ▶ Add information on Orange State Forest to Erving and Wendell State Forests' web pages
  - ▶ Update Erving and Wendell State Forests' trail maps to include information on Orange State Forest

# Shutesbury State Forest:

## Key Resources

| Metric                | Value                                                                                                                              |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Area (acres)          | 789.0                                                                                                                              |
| Landscape Designation | Woodland (753.1 acres)<br>No Designation (35.9 acres)                                                                              |
| Rare Species          | 0 State; 0 Federal                                                                                                                 |
| Cultural Resources    | 0 total<br>0 on National Register                                                                                                  |
| Recreation            | Dog walking, on leash<br>Hiking/Walking<br>Hunting<br>Nature study/Photography<br>Skiing, cross-country<br>Snowshoeing<br>Trapping |



# Shutesbury State Forest: Key Findings



- ▶ New England Trail passes through the Forest
- ▶ 7 Priority Recommendations, including:
  - ▶ Survey for Japanese stilt grass and begin management of all known populations within the Forest. Encourage abutters to control this invasive plant on their properties
  - ▶ Review user-created trails in the Cooleyville Road Tract and assess for impacts to natural and cultural resources. Actively close any impacting sensitive resources
  - ▶ Inventory road conditions and review maintenance practices to ensure that the Forest's roads are maintained for use by emergency vehicles.

# Warwick State Forest: Key Resources

| Metric                | Value                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Area (acres)          | 9,534.9                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Landscape Designation | Parkland (10.9 acres)<br>Reserve (3,164.4 acres)<br>Woodland (6,059.0 acres)<br>No Designation (300.7 acres)                                                                      |
| Rare Species          | 13 State; 1 Federal                                                                                                                                                               |
| Cultural Resources    | 0 total<br>0 on National Register                                                                                                                                                 |
| Recreation            | Bicycling, mountain'<br>Canoeing/Kayaking<br>Fishing<br>Hiking/Walking<br>Horseback riding<br>Hunting<br>Skiing, cross country<br>Snowmobiling<br>Snowshoeing<br>Wildlife viewing |



# Warwick State Forest: Key Findings



- ▶ Part of a broad conservation landscape; contiguous with DCR, MassWildlife, and Land Trust properties
- ▶ New England Trail passes through the Forest
- ▶ 20 Priority Recommendations, including:
  - ▶ Monitor the known population of the Federally Endangered plant and survey for additional populations
  - ▶ Assess culverts with high restoration potential for replacement with structures consistent with the Massachusetts Stream Crossing Handbook and the most recent Climate Resilience Design Standards
  - ▶ Develop a Site Plan for the recreational resources around Sheomet Lake to address formalizing existing gateway; provision of picnic facilities; opportunities to add accessible resources; road improvements; creation of a car-top boat ramp; and controlling vehicle access to lake shore

# Wendell State Forest: Key Resources

| Metric                | Value                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Area (acres)          | 7,882.7                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Landscape Designation | Parkland (112.7 acres)<br>Reserve (4,012.6 acres)<br>Woodland (3,634.0 acres)<br>No Designation (123.5 acres)                                                                  |
| Rare Species          | 8 State; 0 Federal                                                                                                                                                             |
| Cultural Resources    | 14 total<br>0 on National Register                                                                                                                                             |
| Recreation            | Baseball<br>Biking, mountain<br>Canoeing/Kayaking<br>Fishing<br>Hiking/Walking<br>Horseback riding<br>Hunting<br>Ice skating<br>Picnicking<br>Snowmobiling<br>Wildlife viewing |



# Wendell State Forest: Key Findings



- ▶ New England Trail passes through the Forest
- ▶ 32 Priority Recommendations, including:
  - ▶ Design, permit, and construct improvements to the existing accessible trail to meet most recent accessibility standards
  - ▶ Renew partnership with the Western Massachusetts Chapter of NEMBA to minimize unauthorized trail construction and to create a new VSA
  - ▶ Work with AMC to address Park Operations concerns
  - ▶ Conduct environmental review of rock climbing at Mormon Hollow Crag; if appropriate, work with WMCC to renew the expired VSA and finalize the Mormon Hollow Crag management plan

# 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 RMPs are available for review at:

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/central-highlands-district-rmps>

- ▶ 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: **October 18, 2025***

*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](mailto:mass.parks@mass.gov)

Thank you!

