

DCR's Landscape Designations and Management Guidelines

10-year review



MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF
CONSERVATION AND RECREATION



Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Governor
Charles D. Baker

Lieutenant Governor
Karyn E. Polito

Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary
Bethany A. Card

Department of Conservation and Recreation Commissioner
Douglas J. Rice

DCR Mission

**To protect, promote and enhance our
common wealth of natural, cultural
and recreational resources
for the well-being of all.**



MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF
CONSERVATION AND RECREATION

DCR's Core Principles

1. Provide access to a diversity of outdoor recreational experiences and unique landscapes that is equitable, inclusive, and welcoming
2. Conserve lands, water, and forests by integrating science, research, and technical expertise into the management of our natural resources
3. Advance climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts by implementing sustainable practices and advancing resiliency across our infrastructure, assets, and resources
4. Support healthy communities by providing places for people to connect with nature and each other
5. Inspire generations of stewards by recognizing and honoring our legacy through partnerships, public engagement, and education

Meeting Logistics

- The second half of the meeting will involve break out rooms for small group discussion and comment.
- You will also have the opportunity to submit written comments by Wednesday, September 28th, 2022 at:
 - DCR Public Comments <https://www.mass.gov/forms/dcr-public-comments>
- *Please note that this public meeting will be recorded; the recording will be a public record.*

Forest Future Visioning 2009 - 2010

- Technical Steering Committee, Advisory Group of Stakeholders
- Adoption of an Ecosystem Services Model
 - Biological/ecosystem diversity
 - Soil, air, water quality
 - Carbon sequestration
 - Nutrient cycling
 - Culture, history, spiritual values
 - Public recreation
 - Renewable wood products
- Landscape Designations and Management Guidelines



Landscape Designation Types

Reserves

Protect the least fragmented forested areas, representing diverse ecological settings and long-term evolutionary processes that can be monitored to assess and inform forest stewardship.

Parklands

Focus on recreation, reconnecting society to nature while recognizing aesthetic and cultural values and protecting sensitive resources.

Woodlands

Protect and restore forests by implementing excellent, sustainable forest management practices to promote forest species and age class diversity as model forestry for the general public and landowners and to provide high quality forest products to local markets.

Landscape Designations and Management Guidelines 2010-2011

Fall 2010

- Focus: designation selection criteria and management guideline components
- 7 Public Meetings
- 358 attendees
- Over 350 written comments

Spring 2011

- Focus: Applied designations and draft management guidelines
- 7 Public Meetings
- 242 attendees
- Over 400 written comments





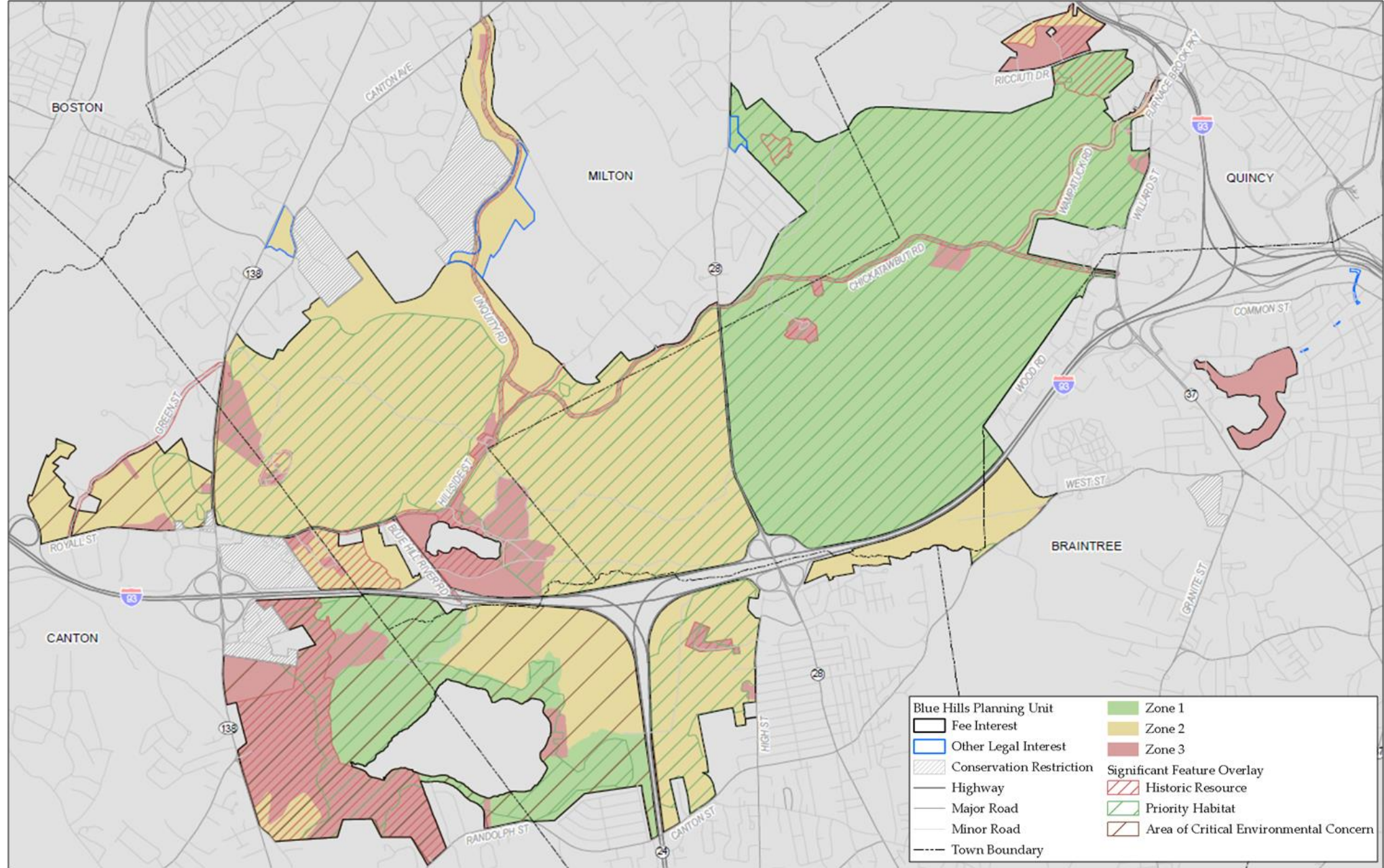
Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation

Landscape Designations for DCR Parks & Forests: Selection Criteria and Management Guidelines



March 2012

Blue Hills Reservation Parkland



2012 Management Guidelines

Future Designations, p. 7:

In most cases, land acquired by DCR after the Landscape Designation process concludes will receive the same Designation as the DCR facility that the new acquisition is expanding. For those acquisitions that result in the creation of a new DCR facility, or have different characteristics than surrounding facilities, or create a new resource management or recreational opportunities, an internal assessment and analysis process will ensue and an interim designation made, to be finalized when a Resource Management Plan is completed.

Review, p. 14:

DCR will review both the Landscape Designations and the management guidelines every ten years to assess their effectiveness in reaching the agency's goals of providing for the broad range of ecosystem services and make any necessary adjustments as a result in order to increase effectiveness.

Landscape Designations 2022 Review

- ✓ *January 2022:* Internal Working Group representing wide cross section of DCR assembled
- ✓ *February - May 2022:* Review 2012 Guidelines text for clarity, review how the designations and management guidelines work in practice, discuss how to be responsive to climate resiliency needs and incorporate new data, review for consistency with the 2020 FAP
- ✓ *June - July 2022:* Review acquisitions DCR has made in the past ten years; solicit wider internal input; Consultation with FRSAC; Consultation with DFW; Brief the Stewardship Council on public engagement plan
- *August - September 2022:* Public process to solicit input and feedback
- *Fall 2022:* Release Landscape Designations 2022 review

Assessment to Date

Consistency

- Language
- Forest Action Plan Goals
- DCR Core Principles

Increased Focus Areas

- Climate resilience and forestry's role
- Environmental Justice

GIS Updates

- Reviewing data - boundaries, updated trails data
- Reviewing the Intensive Use Areas
- Land acquisitions through June 2022

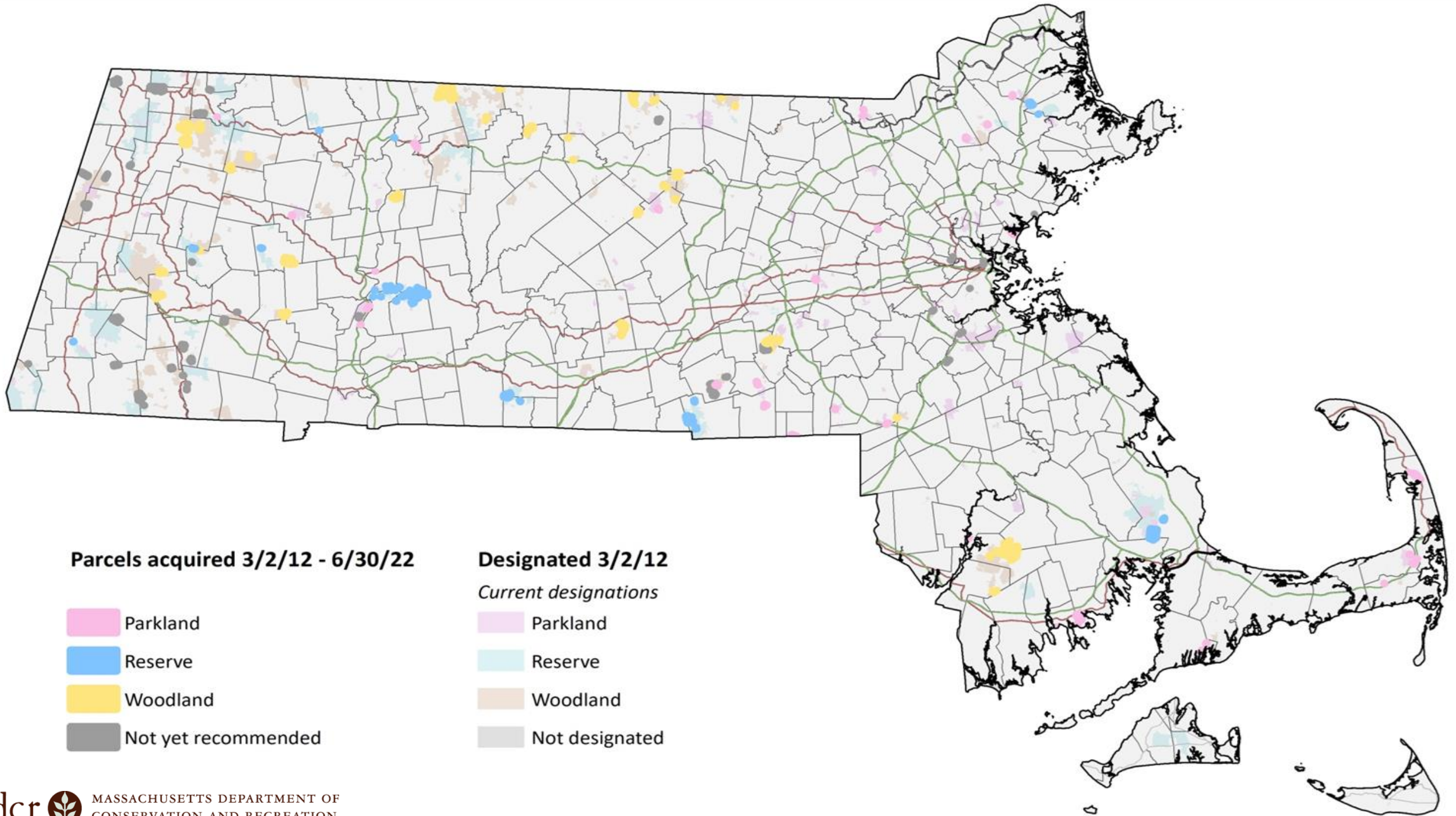
Larger Considerations

- Establishing Patch Reserves
- Where appropriate to enhance specific habitats, the ability to increase opening sizes commensurate with the species as recommended by the MA Division of Fisheries & Wildlife
- Establishing SMART goals for 2032 review



Actions Not Implemented

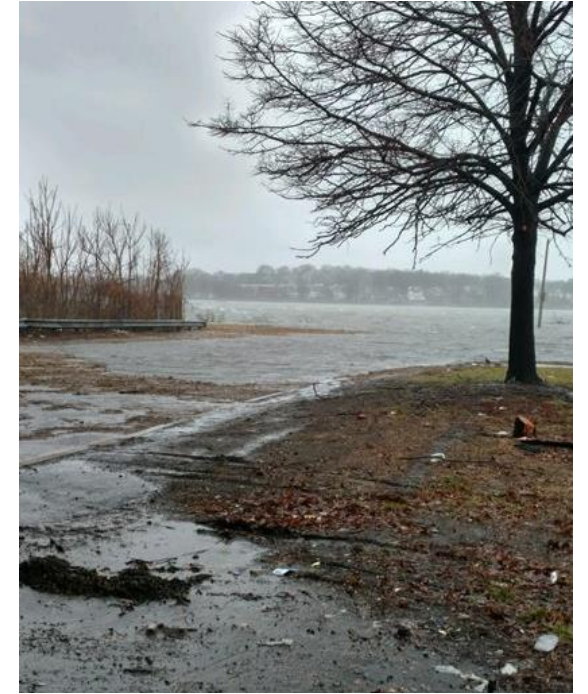
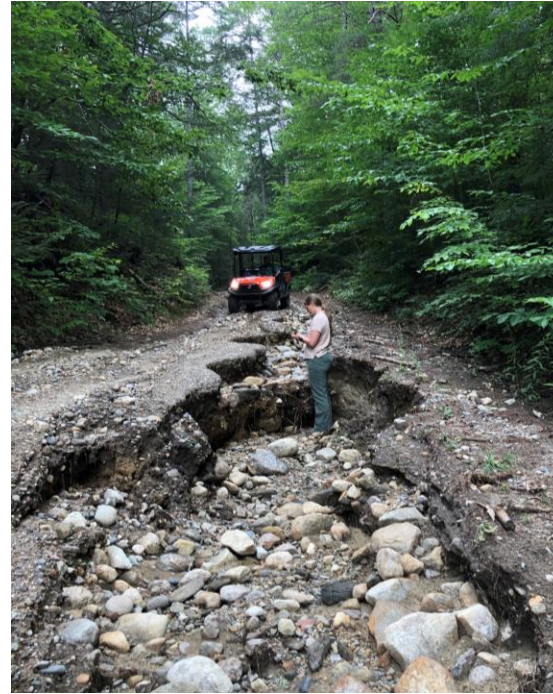
- Identify Patch Reserves
- Woodlands modeling analysis for former MDC properties
- Pilot Demonstration Forest with a local community
- Review Wilderness Areas every 5 years
- Updating the Massachusetts Highly Destructive Forest Invasive Species Response Plan to address new forest health threats



Actions 2012 - 2022

- Creating the Director of Forest Stewardship position
- Forest Reserves Science Advisory Committee (FRSAC)
- Applied OHV coarse and fine filter analysis
- Work closely with DFW, consulting the State Wildlife Action Plan and the for guidance in habitat protection
- Continuing to monitor and add to CFI plots
- Surveying and marking all boundaries
- 2020 State Forest Action Plan
- Hiring a Climate Forester





Changes in climate affect the way storms and hazards impact DCR's natural, cultural, and recreational resources

Supporting Statewide Decarbonization Roadmap

Energy Efficiency and Flexibility



Aggressively pursuing energy efficiency and flexibility to enable cost-effective decarbonization

End Use Energy



Transitioning buildings, vehicles, and other end uses away from consuming fossil fuels

Decarbonizing Energy Supply



Producing zero and low-carbon energy supplies to power our energy system

Carbon Sequestration



Balancing remaining emissions by facilitating carbon dioxide removal from the atmosphere

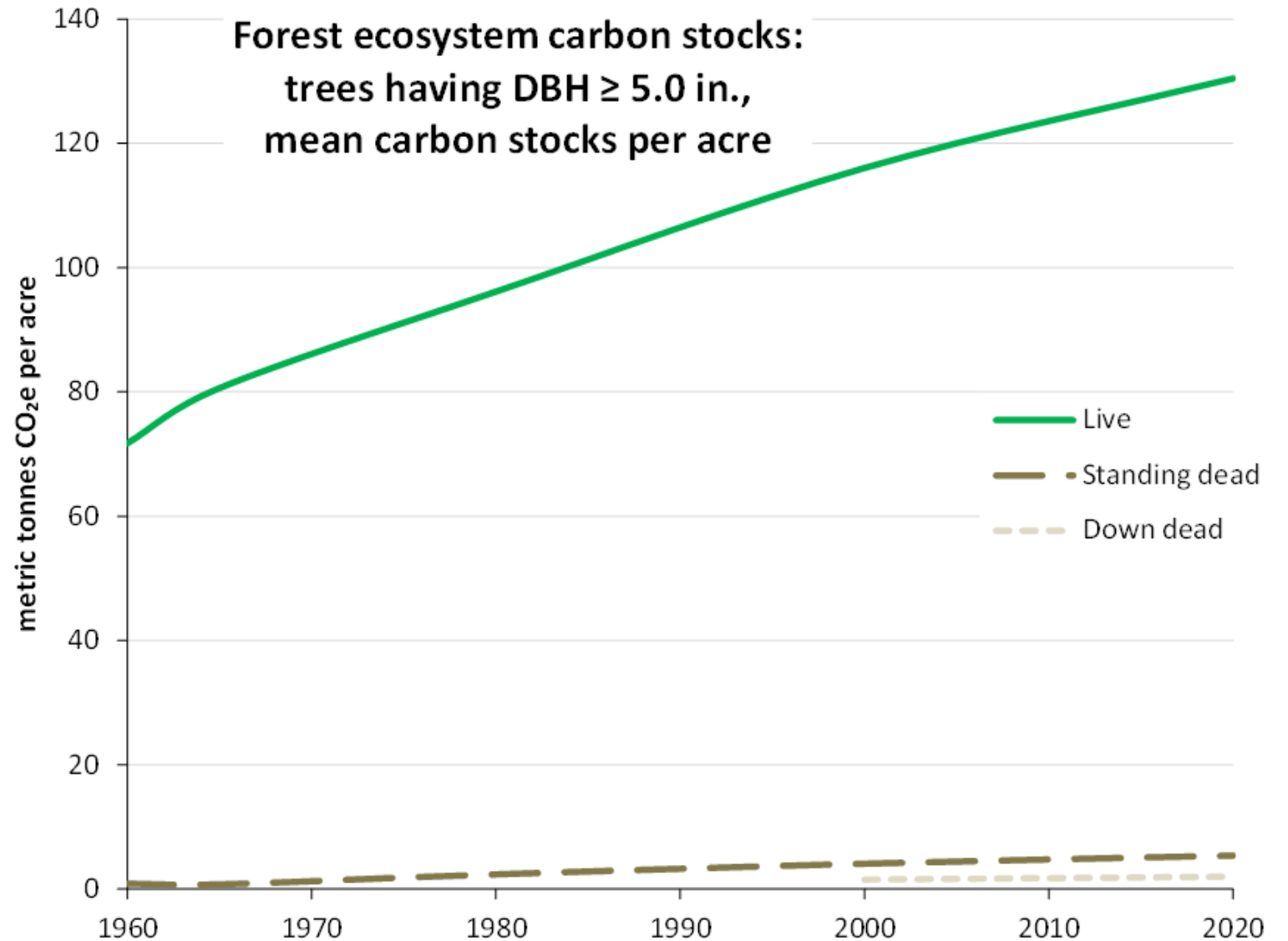
Continuous Forest Inventory (CFI) Program

- Established in the late 1950s
- Over 2,000 sample plots, located in all 3 designations
- Documents dimensions, characteristics, and fate of over 100,000 trees, other vegetation, stand, and forest characteristics
- Documents the status and trends associated with forest health, carbon storage, growth, yield, and mortality
- Helps to identify threats and opportunities with respect to forest management
- Gives us the information needed to model stand and landscape responses to different forest management scenarios



Continuous Forest Inventory

DCR uses CFI data to create models and algorithms that allow for apples-to-apples comparisons to FIA data



Ecosystem Benefits of Forest Management

- Restoration of native ecosystems
- Increase forest resilience from pest threats
- Wildlife habitat enhancement
- Managing for carbon – both sequestration and storage
- Recreational access improvements and hazard tree removal
- Restore fuel breaks in fire prone areas
- Diversify species and stand age structure
- Produce forest products
- Provide forest products payments to municipalities
- Demonstration forestry - be leaders in exemplary forest management

Public Feedback – Some Themes

- Accessible trails should be present through all 3 designations
- Carrying capacity in the parks – lots of use in all our forests
- Climate –several comments on carbon sequestration and different ideas on ways to increase
- All DCR land should be Reserves
- Stop managing nature – it can manage itself
- Eliminate remaining plantations in our forests
- DCR should be allowed to create larger openings for wildlife, up to 30 acres
- Need for more research, such as biological surveys
- Educate the public about how foresters make decisions on the ground; create StoryMaps
- Need to provide baseline information about different aspects of forest stewardship
- Biological diversity, pollinators, and old growth are all important
- Maintain early succession areas rather than create new ones in mature forests

Breakout Group Topics

- What elements from the 2012 Landscape Designations and Management Guidelines need clarification, or reconsideration?
- DCR is considering identifying Patch Reserves, either small properties, portions of bigger ones, or both. What are your thoughts on this? Should the focus be on forested areas or is this a concept applicable to non-forested properties?
- DFW recommends that openings greater than 5 acres be allowed to enhance habitat conditions for species of greatest conservation need. What are your thoughts on increasing the opening size limit for habitat enhancement?
- Please share your ideas for potential SMART goals that will identify some benchmarks and assist with our future assessment in 2032.

Additional Questions, if time allows:

- Please share your ideas for potential research opportunities in Reserves, Woodlands and Parklands.
- What would you like to see DCR offer for interpretive programs and other public educational efforts around forest stewardship? How about for other resource stewardship activities?

Thank You

- Recording and tonight's slide deck will be available at:
www.mass.gov/dcr/past-public-meetings
- If you have additional comments on this project:
 - *Submit online:* www.mass.gov/dcr/public-comment
 - *Deadline: Wednesday, September 28, 2022*
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
- Future meeting information can be found under Upcoming Public Meetings at:
www.mass.gov/dcr