

The Department of Conservation and Recreation's Division of Water Supply Protection, Office of Watershed Management (DWSP) is responsible for providing high quality source drinking water to the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) for distribution of 200 million gallons a day to 3.1 million people in 53 Commonwealth communities. The 412 billion gallon/39.4 mi<sup>2</sup> Quabbin Reservoir and the 65 billion gallon/6.5 mi<sup>2</sup> Wachusett Reservoir are the heart of this watershed system, along with water seasonally diverted from the Ware River. The Sudbury Reservoir system serves as an emergency reserve. DWSP owns over 100,000 acres of land within the 466 mi<sup>2</sup> total watershed area. DWSP is continually planning to maintain the superior water quality in its reservoirs.

There are three critical components to the DWSP planning process for each watershed. **The Public Access Plan** describes the management policies that allow people to recreate on DWSP lands while still protecting water quality. **The Land Management Plan** is a thorough description of the watershed's physical features, the natural resources on DWSP property, and the variety of techniques used by the agency to enhance water quality, including land protection and forest and wildlife management. **The Watershed Protection Plan** takes information from the Public Access Plan and Land Management Plan and integrates water monitoring findings and other studies to create an action plan that is the basis for DWSP's annual Work Plan and budget. The Watershed Protection Plan acts as an "umbrella," encompassing all efforts by DWSP that affect both public and private watershed lands in the quest to provide high quality drinking water that requires minimal treatment.

Additional studies and reports utilized in the Watershed Protection Plan include annual **Water Quality Reports** and basin specific **Environmental Quality Assessments** that identify water quality trends, link problems to sources of contamination, and develop prioritized goals for corrective actions as well as **Emergency Action Plans** which detail the necessary steps and chain of command required in case of a catastrophe associated with the reservoirs. **The Land Acquisition Panel** analyzes and guides DWSP's purchase of properties that are critical to long-term water quality protection. **Terrestrial Invasive Species, Aquatic Invasive Species, Gull Habitat, Stormwater Management, Hazardous Materials Emergency Response, and Climate Change Vulnerability** are some of the topics that have come under special study.

Information from all of these plans and reports is integrated into the **Annual Work Plan**, which is submitted for approval by the five-person board of trustees of the Water Supply Protection Trust. The Trust was established by the legislature in 2004 as a mechanism for MWRA to fund DWSP.

Public outreach is an important element of DWSP's watershed protection efforts. Each plan seeks input from a variety of perspectives – such as legislatively mandated watershed advisory groups, visitors, abutters, and user interest groups – through public meetings, the press, and the DCR website. DWSP supports an ongoing discourse with the public on water supply protection strategies through individual contact by DWSP Watershed Rangers and interpretive staff, implementation of the Watershed Protection Act, municipal technical assistance, fact sheets, and other information through the agency's social media and website.

This comprehensive approach to watershed planning has made it possible for MWRA to maintain a waiver from federal filtration requirements and make the Office of Watershed Management a national model. While consultants are utilized when necessary for specific expertise, the vast majority of these plans and outreach material are developed by DWSP staff. The table on the reverse side provides a summary of the status of DWSP's plans, including the current version, term, and history. Recent plans, fact sheets, newsletters, and other information about the Office of Watershed Management are available on-line at [www.mass.gov/dcr/watershed](http://www.mass.gov/dcr/watershed).

# Planning for the Protection of the DCR/MWRA Water Supply System

## Division of Water Supply Protection

### Office of Watershed Management

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OFFICE OF WATERSHED MANAGEMENT  
Department of Conservation and Recreation  
Division of Water Supply Protection  
10 Park Plaza, Suite 6620  
Boston, MA 02116  
617-626-1250  
[www.mass.gov/dcr/watershed](http://www.mass.gov/dcr/watershed)

dcr  
Massachusetts



**DCR Division of Water Supply Protection  
Office of Watershed Management Planning Summary**

*All plans produced by DWSP staff unless noted otherwise*

Type of Plan	Latest Publication	Term	Next Planned Revision	Previous Versions (Consultant)
<b>Watershed Protection Plans</b>				
<a href="#">Quabbin Reservoir/Ware River</a>	2023	5 years	2028	1991 (Rizzo); 2000; 2008; 2013; 2018
<a href="#">Wachusett Reservoir</a>	2023	5 years	2028	1991 (Rizzo); 1998 (CDM); 2003; 2008; 2013; 2018
<a href="#">Sudbury Reservoir</a>	2023	As needed	2028	1997 (CEI); 2008; 2013; 2018
<b>Land Management Plans</b>				
<a href="#">Quabbin Reservoir</a>	2017	10 years	2027	1961, 1972, 1986, 1995, 2007
<a href="#">Ware River</a>	2017	10 years	2027	1986, 2003
<a href="#">Wachusett Reservoir</a>	2017	10 years	2027	2001
<a href="#">Sudbury Reservoir</a>	2017	10 years	2027	2005
<b>Public Access Plans</b>				
<a href="#">Quabbin Reservoir</a>	2018	10 years	2028	1988, 1998; 2006
<a href="#">Ware River</a>	2023	10 years	2033	1988, 2000; 2010
<a href="#">Wachusett Reservoir</a>	2023	10 years	2033	1996; 2003; 2011
<a href="#">Sudbury and Foss Reservoirs</a>	2022	10 years	2032	1994, 2002, 2010
<b>Ongoing Plans and Reports</b>				
<a href="#">DWSP Fiscal Year Work Plan</a>		1 year		Annually since 2005
<a href="#">Quabbin and Wachusett Water Quality Reports</a>		1 year		Annually since 1987
Environmental Quality Assessments (Replaced Sanitary Surveys in 2000)		5 years		Sanitary Surveys: 1988–2000. EQAs: 2000-present
<a href="#">Land Acquisition</a>		As needed		A list of properties is periodically developed for approval by the MWRA.
<a href="#">Forest Management Projects</a>		1 year		Annually since 1980s
Emergency Action Plans		As needed		1993–1995 (GZA and GEI); 2006–Present by MWRA and DCR
Dam Inspections (Phase 1)		2 - 5 years		High Hazard Dams – 2 years Significant Hazard Dams – 5 years Various contractors under MWRA or DCR supervision
<b>Special Studies</b>				
<a href="#">Terrestrial Invasive Species</a>	2011		2024	
<a href="#">Aquatic Invasive Species</a>	2016		2024	2010
Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment – Phase 1			2024	
<a href="#">Gull Habitat</a>	2007-2010			
Stormwater Management	2016			2014 Highway BMPs (with DOT); NPDES Phase II Outreach Material (2006-2015); 1999 (CDM)

The four separate Land Management Plans were combined into one comprehensive Land Management Plan in 2017, including work developed for previously scheduled updates. The Watershed Protection Plans were unified in 2008. Several Access Plan updates were delayed due to Covid-19.