

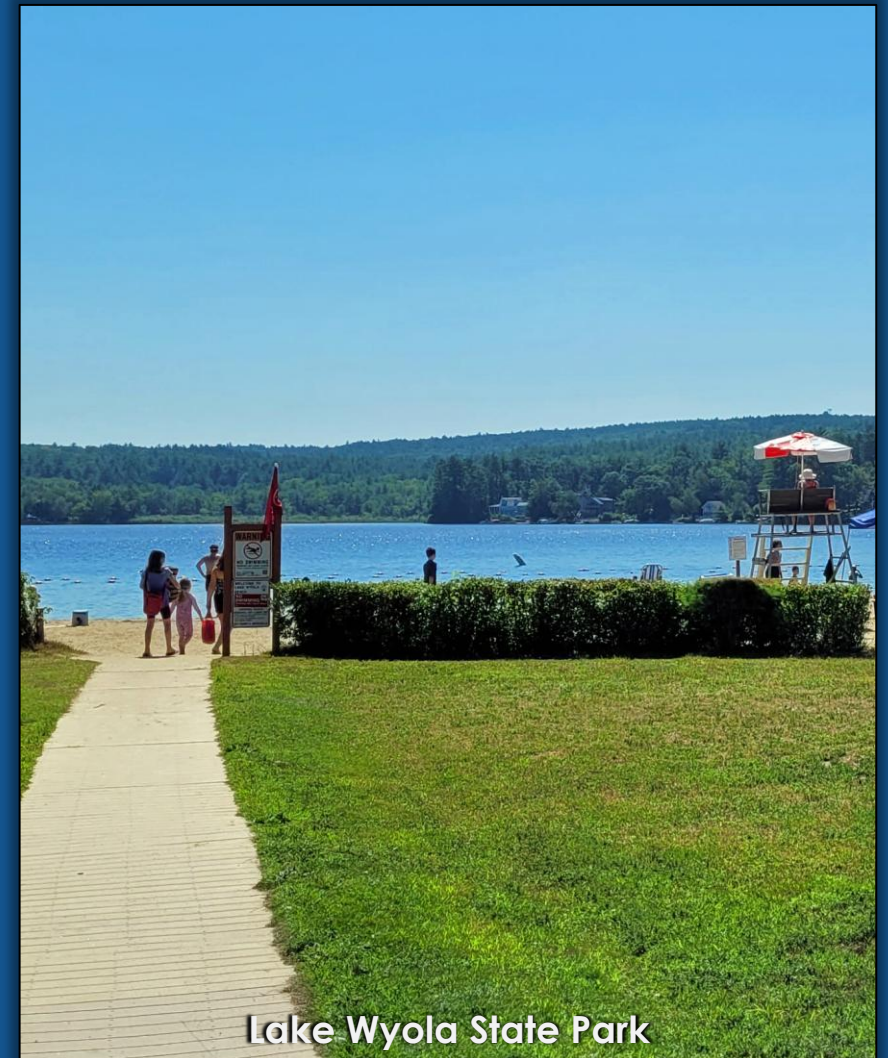


Erving Complex Resource Management Plans (RMPs)

November 13, 2025

Today's Presentation

1. RMP Mandate
2. Erving Complex RMPs
 - Key Resources
 - Key Findings
3. Comments Received
4. Questions, Comments, & Conversation



1. RMP Mandate



Sheomet Lake, Warwick State Forest

M.G.L. c. 21 § 2F

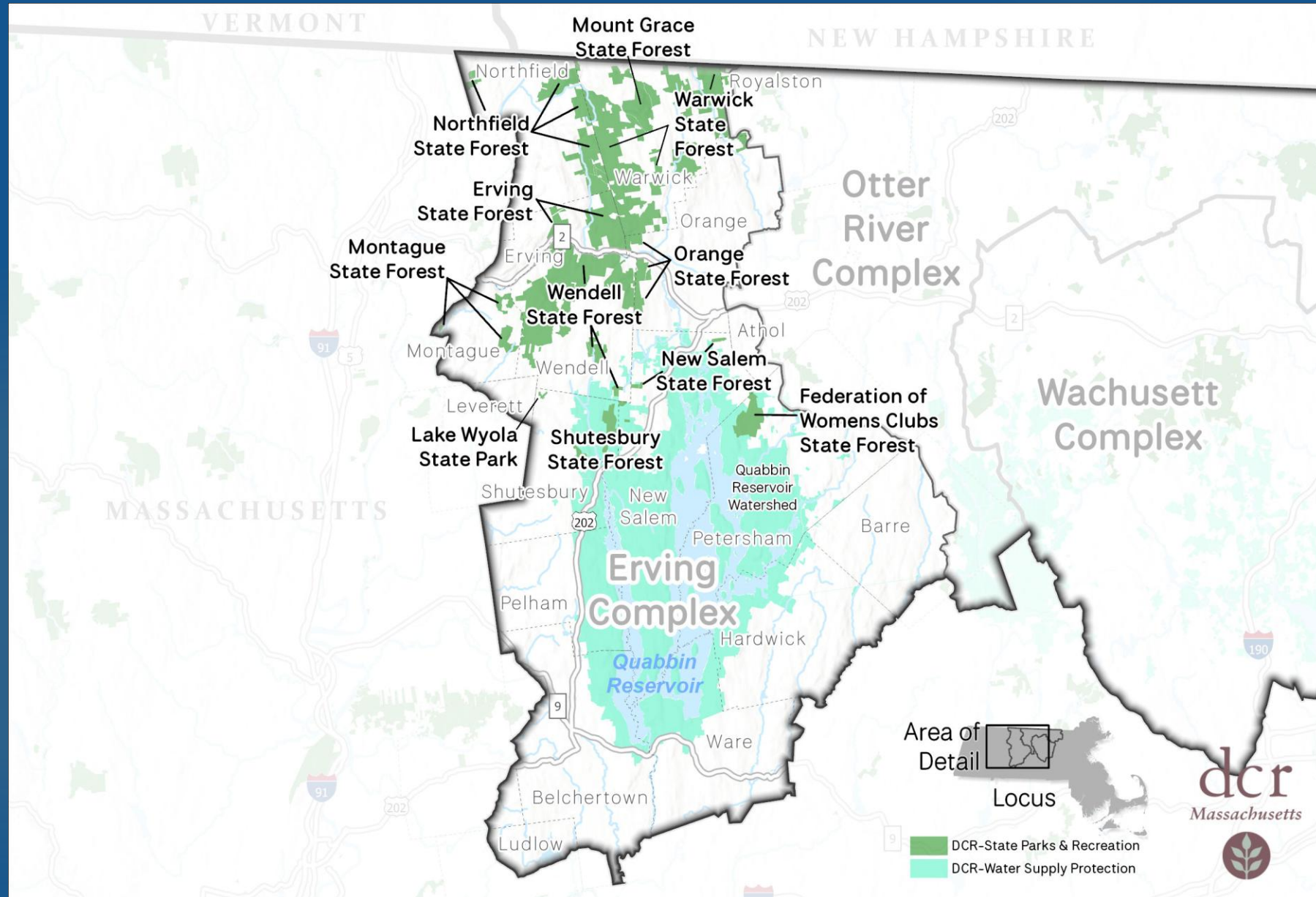


“The Commissioner of Conservation and Recreation shall submit management plans to the Stewardship Council with respect to all reservations, parks, and forests under the management of the department...”

2. Erving Complex RMPs

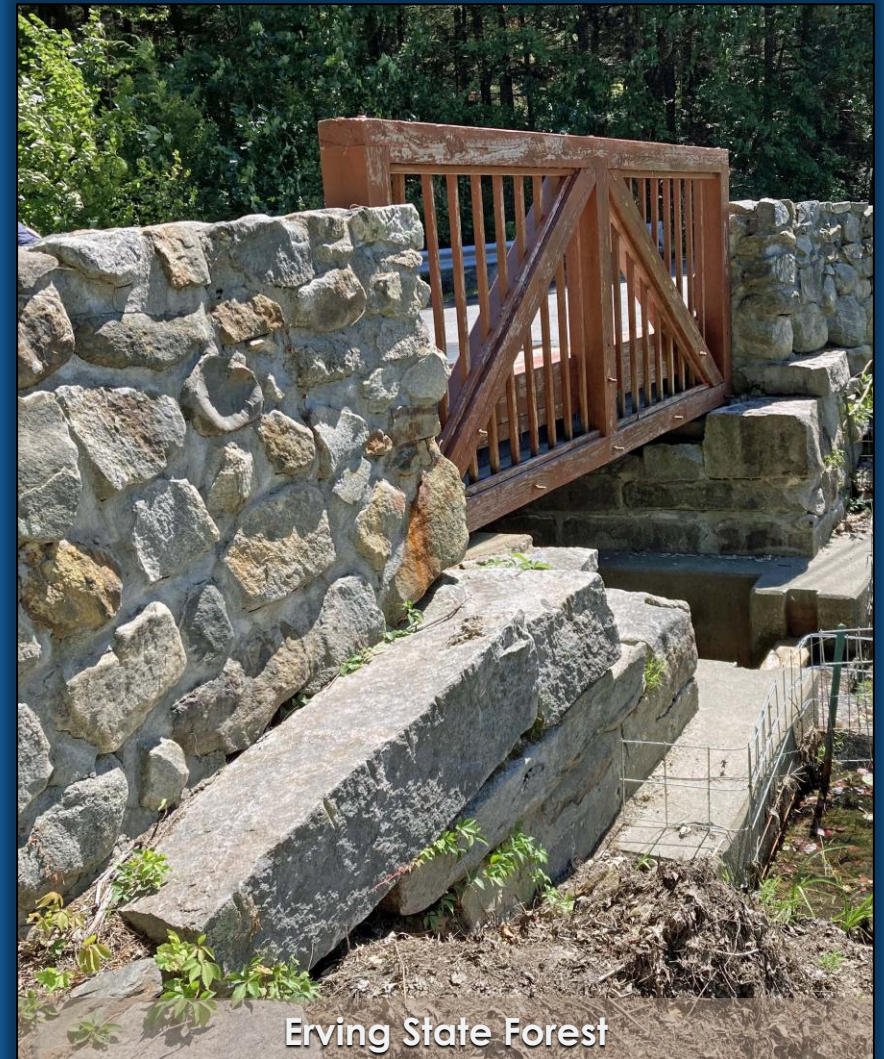


Erving Complex



Erving Complex RMPs - Process

- ▶ Public meeting (for entire Central Highlands District) - June 2022
- ▶ Drafting plans - 2022–2024
- ▶ Release of draft RMPs - September 10th
- ▶ Public meeting - September 18th
- ▶ Public Comment Period - through October 18th
- ▶ Presentation to Stewardship Council - November 13th



Erving Complex RMPs – Common Recommendations (Part 1)



Natural Resources:

- ▶ Apply Landscape Designations to portions of property lacking such designations
- ▶ Assess culvert/culverts with high restoration potential for replacement with a structure consistent with the Massachusetts Stream Crossing Handbook and the most recent Climate Resilience Design Standards. Where viable, program funds for culvert replacement and replace culvert
- ▶ Following appropriate review and permitting, implement Invasives Plant Management Plan: Central Region (BSC Group 2017) for aquatic and terrestrial invasive plants. Maintain actions as needed
- ▶ Resolve potential encroachments in accordance with Agency-wide guidance and Best Management Practices
- ▶ Review and implement MassDEP Wellhead Protection Tips and Guidance (MassDEP 1995, MassDEP 2011) within the Zone I Wellhead Protection Area
- ▶ Survey, document, and submit documentation to certify potential vernal pools in NHESP habitat of MESA-protected vernal pool obligate species or in Woodlands

Erving Complex RMPs – Common Recommendations (Part 2)



Cultural Resources:

- ▶ Conduct an archaeological reconnaissance survey (950 CMR 70) in cooperation with municipal, tribal, and non-profit partners. Complete appropriate Massachusetts Historical Commission archaeological site forms for identified archaeological resources
- ▶ Work with Indigenous partners to inventory, document, conserve, and interpret Indigenous resources and Indigenous history within the Forest/Park

Erving Complex RMPs – Common Recommendations (Part 3)



Recreation:

- ▶ Develop and install a Welcome Wayside
- ▶ Ensure that DPH Fish Consumption Advisory Posters are posted at all fishing access locations
- ▶ Establish a DCR web page for the property
- ▶ Following field staff review of OHV use in the Forest, add barriers, such as gates, as appropriate to deter OHV use
- ▶ Implement key recommendations from Program Accessibility Assessment
- ▶ Increase the presence of EPOs, DCR Rangers, and Forest operations staff, as appropriate and available, in areas with high OHV use
- ▶ Install Rules and Regulations signs and DCR standard “Danger, No Swimming” sign at unauthorized/closed swimming area(s)
- ▶ Prepare a trail map
- ▶ Replace Main Identification Sign with new sign conforming to DCR graphic standards
- ▶ Resolve trail-related threats and opportunities in accordance with Trail Guidelines and Best Practices
- ▶ Work with Geocaching community to ensure that caches located in sensitive natural and cultural resources are relocated

Erving State Forest: Key Resources

Metric	Value
Area (acres)	3,154.2
Landscape Designation	Parkland (233.2 acres) Reserve (594.8 acres) Woodland (2,189.8 acres) No Designation (136.4 acres)
Rare Species	5 State; 0 Federal
Cultural Resources	9 total 0 on National Register
Recreation	Bicycling, mountain Boating Camping Fishing Hiking/Walking Horseback riding Hunting Picnicking Snowmobiling 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 19th-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) No Designation (46.4 acres)
Rare Species	4 State; 0 Federal
Cultural Resources	3 total 0 on National Register
Recreation	Bicycling, mountain Camping Fishing Hiking/Walking Hunting Snowshoeing Trapping 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 in print and electronic publications, and signs
 - ▶ 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 0 on National Register
Recreation	Boating, non-motorized Canoeing/Kayaking Dog walking, on leash Fishing Hiking/Walking Nature study/Photography Picnicking Skiing, cross-country Snowmobiling Swimming/Sunbathing Wildlife viewing Volleyball



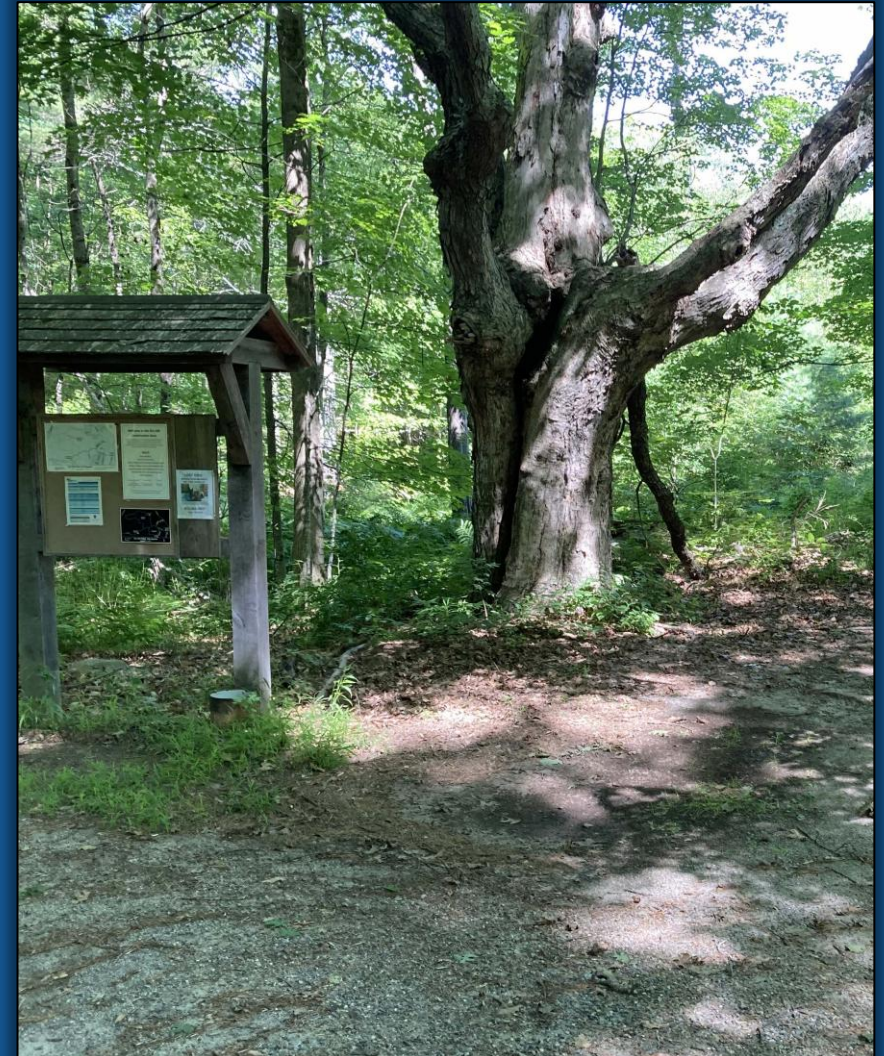
Lake Wyola State Park: Key Findings



- ▶ Carroll Homes Recreation Area includes beach, picnic area, and bathhouse
- ▶ Ripley-Ames House is home to a population of listed bats listed under MESA
- ▶ 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) No Designation (65.9 acres)
Rare Species	7 State; 0 Federal
Cultural Resources	1 total 0 on National Register
Recreation	Dog walking on leash Hiking/Walking Mountain biking Snowmobiling 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 information at trailheads and on the town website to clarify OHV use on state land
 - ▶ 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) Woodland (1,489.2 acres) No Designation (4.2 acres)
Rare Species	1 State; 0 Federal
Cultural Resources	7 total 0 on National Register
Recreation	Biking, mountain Dog walking, on-leash Hiking/Walking Hunting Nature study/Photography Scenic vista viewing Skiing, cross country Sledding, tubing Snowmobiling Snowshoeing Wildlife viewing



Mount Grace State Forest: Key Findings



- ▶ State Forest established via special legislation
- ▶ New England Trail passes through the Forest
- ▶ 10 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 0 on National Register
Recreation	Dog walking, on leash Hunting Snowshoeing 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:
 - ▶ 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) No Designation (1,515.7 acres)
Rare Species	6 State; 0 Federal
Cultural Resources	4 total 0 on National Register
Recreation	Bicycling, mountain Dog walking, off-leash area Hiking/Walking Horseback riding Nature study/Photography Snowshoeing Snowmobiling 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) No Designation (140.0 acres)
Rare Species	1 State; 0 Federal
Cultural Resources	0 total 0 on National Register
Recreation	Hiking/Walking Hunting Nature study/Photography 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) No Designation (35.9 acres)
Rare Species	0 State; 0 Federal
Cultural Resources	0 total 0 on National Register
Recreation	Dog walking, on leash Hiking/Walking Hunting Nature study/Photography Skiing, cross-country Snowshoeing Trapping



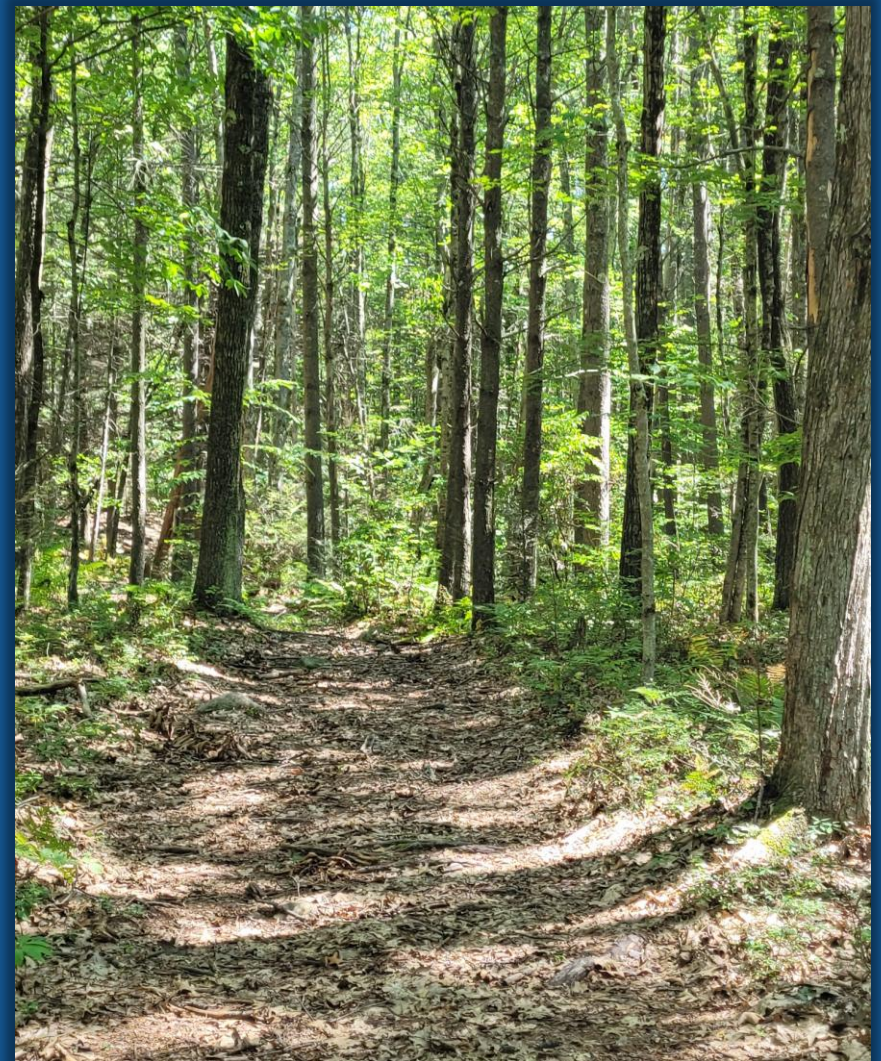
Shutesbury State Forest: Key Findings



- ▶ 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) Reserve (3,164.4 acres) Woodland (6,059.0 acres) No Designation (300.7 acres)
Rare Species	13 State; 1 Federal
Cultural Resources	0 total 0 on National Register
Recreation	Bicycling, mountain' Canoeing/Kayaking Fishing Hiking/Walking Horseback riding Hunting Skiing, cross country Snowmobiling Snowshoeing 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
- ▶ 21 Priority Recommendations, including:
 - ▶ Monitor the known population of the Federally Endangered plant and survey for additional populations
 - ▶ Post interpretive and/or regulatory signs at access points to bogs and fens
 - ▶ 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) Reserve (4,012.6 acres) Woodland (3,634.0 acres) No Designation (123.5 acres)
Rare Species	8 State; 0 Federal
Cultural Resources	14 total 0 on National Register
Recreation	Baseball Biking, mountain Canoeing/Kayaking Fishing Hiking/Walking Horseback riding Hunting Ice skating Picnicking Snowmobiling Wildlife viewing



Wendell State Forest: Key Findings



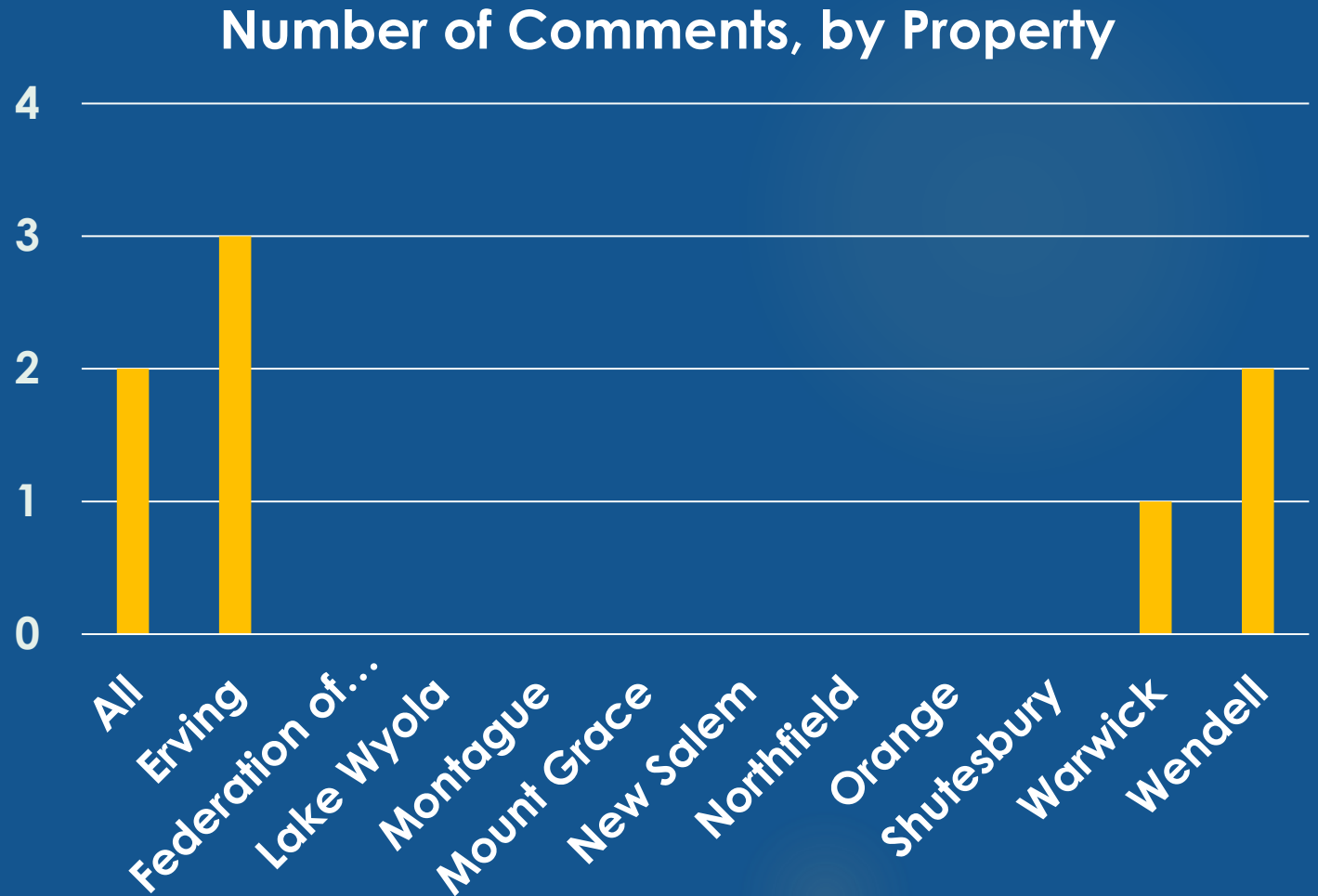
- ▶ New England Trail passes through the Forest
- ▶ 34 Priority Recommendations, including:
 - ▶ Renew partnership with the Western Massachusetts Chapter of NEMBA to minimize unauthorized trail construction and to create a new VSA
 - ▶ Work with AMC to address Park Operations concerns
 - ▶ Conduct environmental 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

3. Comments Received



Public Meeting Comments

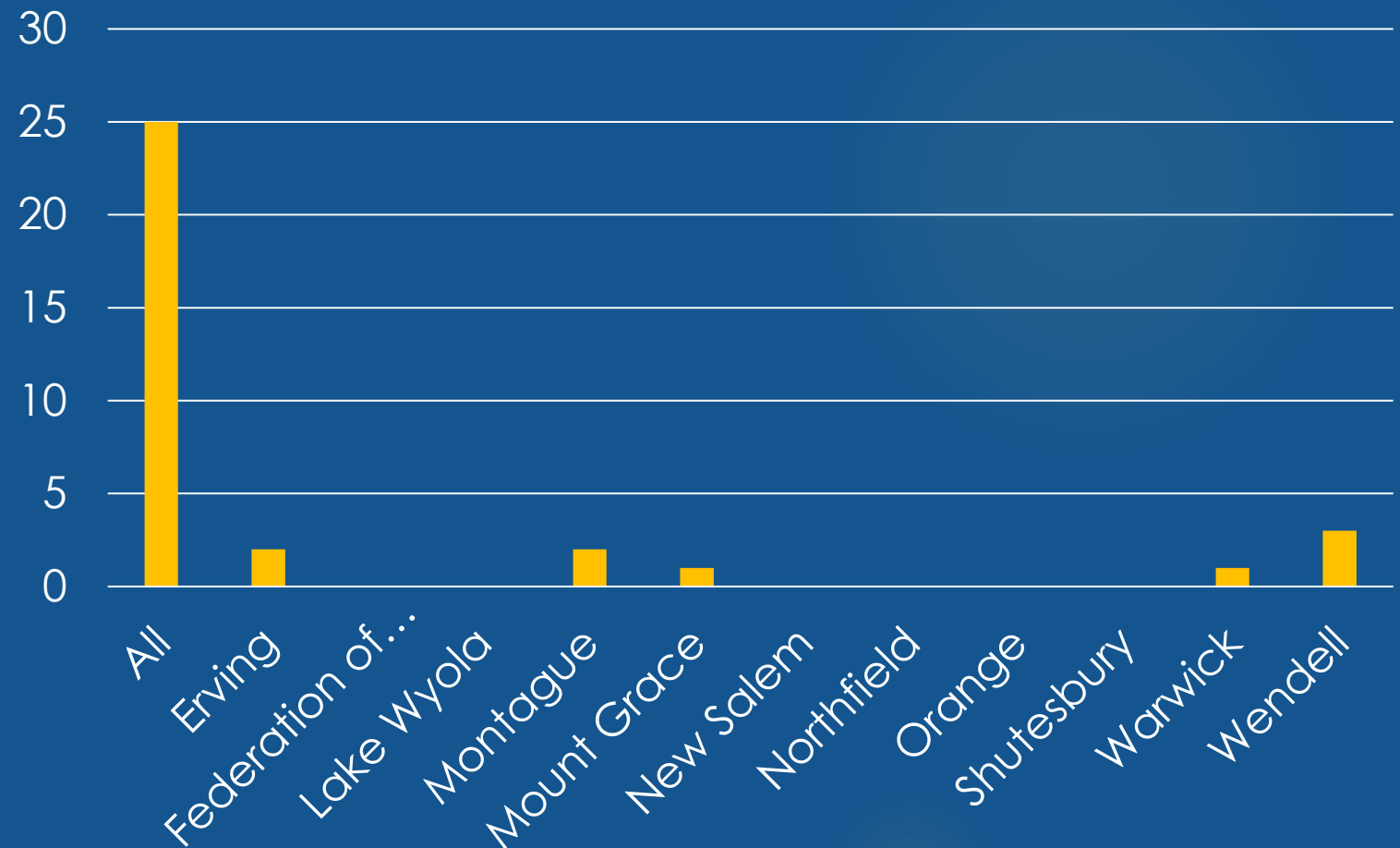
- ▶ # Registrants – 44
- ▶ # Attendees – 31 (70.5% of Registrants)
- ▶ # Attendees commenting – 7



Written Comments

- ▶ # Submittals – 32
 - ▶ 29 Individuals
 - ▶ 3 Groups/Multi-partner

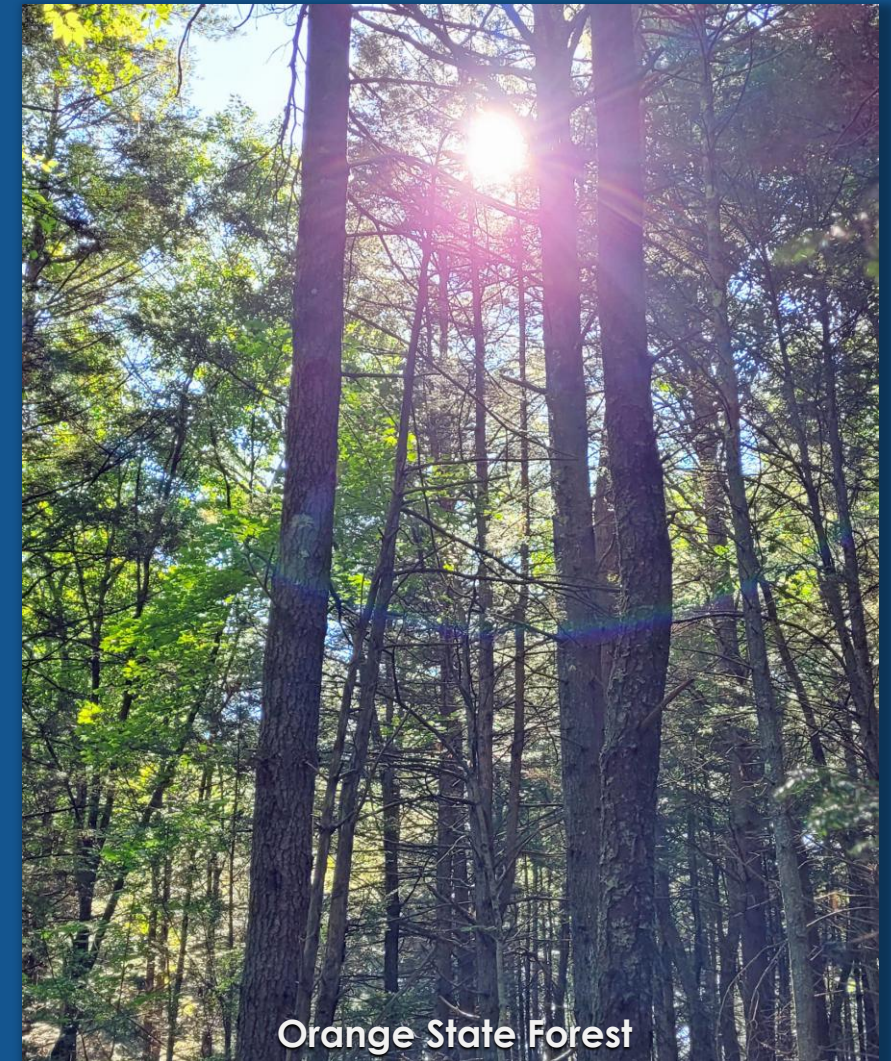
Number of Comments, by Property



Comments Topics – All sources (Part 1)

▶ Natural Resources

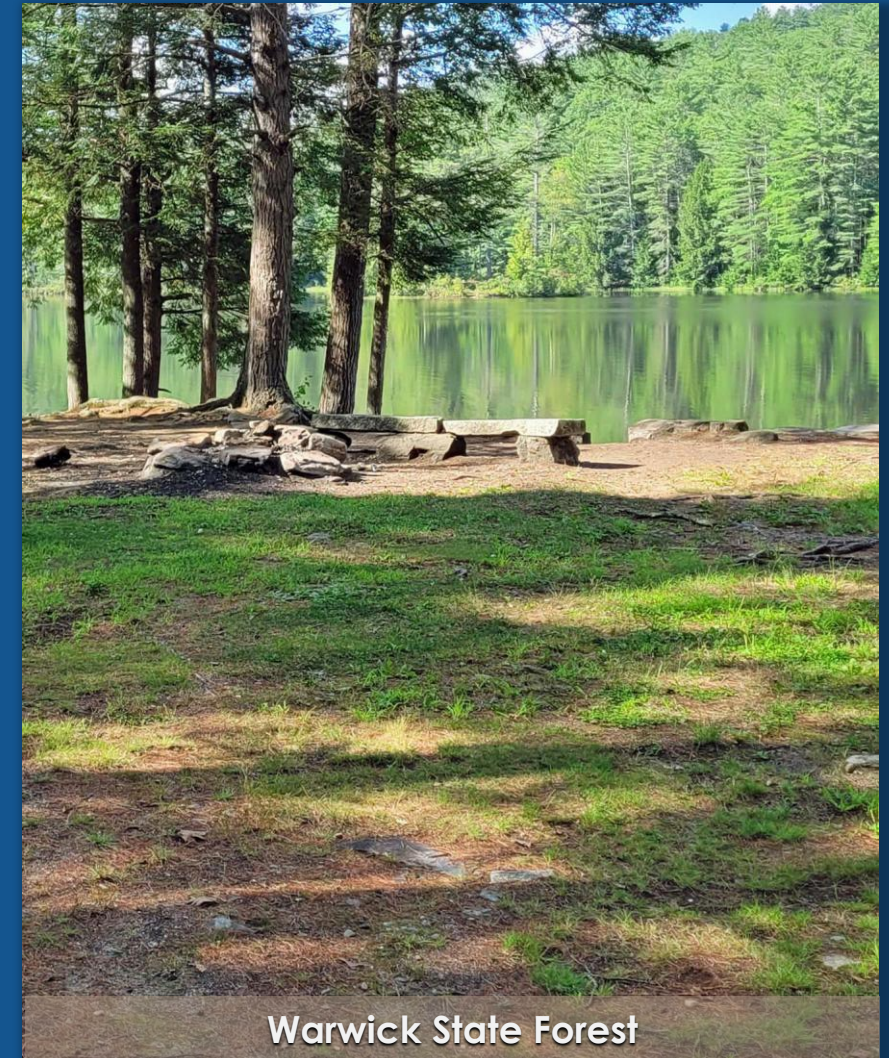
- ▶ Impacts on brook trout and northern long-eared bats
- ▶ Invasive plants – Missing data/support for management
- ▶ Land Acquisition – Statement of support
- ▶ Pollinators – Manage vegetation to promote
- ▶ Forestry
 - ▶ Roads and skid trails not detailed in RMP
 - ▶ Eliminate Woodland Landscape Designation/End logging
 - ▶ Landscape Designations – Apply where missing



Orange State Forest

Comments Topics – All sources (Part 2)

- ▶ Cultural Resources
 - ▶ CCC architecture – Support for retaining rustic style
- ▶ Recreation
 - ▶ Age friendly/dementia-friendly activities
 - ▶ Laurel Lake/Boat Ramp – Multiple Issues
 - ▶ Opposition to proposed local greenway
 - ▶ Management of the New England Trail
 - ▶ Mountain biking - Expand access and trails
 - ▶ OHVs – Statements of opposition/support
 - ▶ Rock climbing – Working with DCR to advance the sport and protect sensitive resources
 - ▶ Snowmobiles/Snowmobile trails as connections to State forests and parks
 - ▶ Wildland recreation – Statement of support



Comments Topics – All sources (Part 3)

▶ RMPs

- ▶ Actions not demonstrably better than “No Action” alternative
- ▶ Issued in contradiction to DCR’s recent commitments and past practices, in violation of MA statutes and policies
- ▶ Management goals run counter to established/peer reviewed science
- ▶ Public process – Coincided with DWSP public process; deadline on a Saturday; disregard for transparency and accountability, public notification, and decision making
- ▶ Erving Complex RMPs should not be adopted until after:
 - ▶ FRMPs have been issued,
 - ▶ Recommendations of the Massachusetts Climate Forestry Committee are fully implemented, and
 - ▶ Other important information and guidelines (e.g., invasive plant data, TMDLs) have been established



4. Questions, Comments, & Conversation



View from the Mount Grace Fire Tower