

# RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# STONY BROOK RESERVATION

Including Camp Meigs Playground; Colella Field and Playground; DeSantis Park; Mother Brook Reservation; Weider Playground; and the Dedham, Enneking, and Turtle Pond Parkways



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# Executive Summary

## Introduction

Resource Management Plans (RMPs) are “working” documents that consider the past, present, and future of a forest, park, or reservation. They include an inventory and assessment of environmental, cultural, and recreational resources; identify unique characteristics and values; and develop clear management goals and objectives. RMPs provide a guide to the short and long-term management of properties under the stewardship of the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). They are intended to be working documents for setting priorities, capital and operational budgeting and resource allocation, and enhancing communication and cooperation with park visitors and the surrounding communities.

The Department of Conservation and Recreation is guided by a legislative mandate (M.G.L. Chapter 21: Section 2F) to prepare management plans for “all reservations, parks, and forests under the management of the department.” Although the mandate does not specify the format or content of these management plans, it does require the following:

*“Said management plans shall include guidelines for the operation and land stewardship of the aforementioned reservations, parks and forests, shall provide for the protection and stewardship of natural and cultural resources and shall ensure consistency between recreation, resource protection, and sustainable forest management.”*

The legislative mandate also establishes two other requirements. First, that the Commissioner of the Department of Conservation and Recreation “shall seek and consider public input in the development of management plans, and shall make draft plans available for a public review and comment period through notice in the Environmental Monitor.” Second, management plans must be reviewed and adopted by the Stewardship Council. Within 30 days of adoption, the Commissioner “...shall file a copy of such management plans as adopted by the council” with the State Secretary and the Joint Committee on the Environment, Natural Resources,

and Agriculture. Resource Management Plans, and the process developed to prepare these plans, exceed all legislative mandates.

This plan covers Stony Brook Reservation; Camp Meigs Playground; Colella Field and Playground; DeSantis Park, Mother Brook Reservation; Weider Playground; and the Dedham, Enneking, and Turtle Pond parkways. These properties are included in this plan because of their physical proximity to Stony Brook Reservation, and also because they share a common management structure.

## Management Goals

The following 11 management goals have been identified for Stony Brook Reservation and its satellite properties.

- Create a “gateway” to the Reservation.
- Establish and nurture programmatic and social connections between the Reservation and its satellites, and surrounding communities.
- Inventory natural resources and manage them to promote native species and communities.
- Promote the Reservation’s history and preserve its cultural resources.
- Improve the existing athletic facilities to increase their availability for use and to decrease ongoing maintenance needs.
- Reorganize and simplify the existing trail system to decrease maintenance and to increase ease of use.
- Honor the legacy of the Thompson Center by ensuring that facilities and activities are available to the widest cross-section of people.
- Develop environmental education programming and materials for diverse audiences.
- Identify and maintain the properties’ boundaries.
- Improve the West District administrative and operations facilities.
- Eliminate unneeded infrastructure.

The first two management goals, creating a “gateway” to the Reservation and establishing connections with surrounding communities offer conceptual frameworks for the remaining nine goals. Although each management goal and

recommendation can and will work independently, several will yield additional benefits if they are addressed as part of these conceptual frameworks.

## Priority Recommendations

This RMP identifies over 70 management recommendations. These recommendations are specific actions to be taken to achieve the management goals. Each recommendation is associated with one of two levels of management and services; basic or enhanced.

- The **basic level** maintains a property's current resources, facilities, and infrastructure. It provides for the continuation of compatible recreation, with the goal of meaningfully and safely connecting visitors to public lands.
- The **enhanced level** expands facilities and operations beyond the basic level to reach a property's higher potential.

Simply put, the basic level optimizes existing activities or facilities and the enhanced level expands upon existing activities or facilities.

Recommendations are associated with the basic level of management and services if they meet any of the following criteria.

- Maintaining or securing public, visitor, and staff health and safety.
- Maintaining essential property infrastructure.
- Providing protection and stewardship for significant or critical cultural and natural resources.
- Ensuring appropriate access and recreational activities.

Recommendations not meeting these criteria are evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine if they are associated with the basic or enhanced level of management and services. Only recommendations associated with the basic level of management and services may be considered priority.

**Priority recommendations focus on stabilizing or improving existing infrastructure.** This includes stopping ongoing damage to buildings, and improving existing recreation facilities and athletic fields.

**Implementation of the following recommendations will increase the protection of Stony Brook's infrastructure and decrease future maintenance costs.**

- Seal the West District Headquarters to the elements.
- Seal the Kelley Field field-house to the elements.
- Seal the house at 57 Dedham Street to the elements.
- Conduct a re-use study for the house at 57 Dedham Street.
- Seal the Thompson Center to the elements.
- Conduct a re-use study for the Thompson Center.

Collectively these recommendations protect the Commonwealth's investment in these buildings until their roles in the operation of Stony Brook, if any, have been identified.

**Implementation of the following recommendation will result in improved recreation facilities.**

- Prepare a Master Plan for Stony Brook's athletic facilities and fields.

Stony Brook's athletic facilities and fields vary in age and condition, and are a collection of individual recreational resources rather than a single recreational complex. This recommendation promotes a holistic assessment of these resources. It is considered a priority recommendation because some recreation facilities (e.g., Olsen Pool bathhouse) are in urgent need of renovation or replacement, and a Master Plan should be in place before any renovations begin.

The estimated cost of implementing all of the recommendations in this plan is \$1,445,000-1,728,000. This includes \$1,385,000-1,643,000 for recommendations associated with a basic level of management and services, and \$60,000-85,000 for recommendations associated with an enhanced level of management and services. The cost of capital projects identified by the recommended Master Plan and building re-use study are in addition to these estimates.

## **Public Participation in Developing this Management Plan**

Notice of a public meeting and of the availability of the draft Stony Brook RMP for public review and comment were published in the February 20, 2008 Environmental Monitor. Additional announcements were made on the DCR web page and press releases were provided to the Hyde Park/Roslindale/West Roxbury Bulletin, Hyde Park Tribune, West Roxbury Transcript, Roslindale Transcript, Daily News Transcript, Boston Globe, Boston Herald, and the Associated Press/Boston. Announcements were also provided to 165 individuals, organizations, libraries, and community centers including those identified by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs' Office of Environmental

Justice. A public meeting was held on March 11, 2008 in the community room of the Boston Police Department's District E-18 station in Hyde Park; 18 people attended. The public comment period on the draft RMP ran from February 20 – March 28, 2008; six sets of written comments were received. Information about the public meeting, a summary of written comments received, a response to those comments, and a summary of substantive revisions to the public review draft are provided in Appendix B (Public Participation).

This Resource Management Plan was submitted to DCR's Stewardship Council on May 15, 2008, and was adopted by the Council on August 7, 2008.