dcr
Massachusetts

Resource Management Plan
Freetown-Fall River State Forest

Adopted by the DCR Stewardship Council Month, 2023

Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation
Division of Conservation and Resource Stewardship
Office of Cultural Resources

Purpose

Resource Management Plans (RMPs) are foundational documents that identify a park, forest, or reservation's defining natural, cultural, and recreational resources and identify potential threats and opportunities to guide DCR's continued stewardship of the property and to inform future decisions about the property in a way that celebrates and preserves its identity.

RMPs are prepared for "all reservations, parks, and forests under the management of the department." (M.G.L. Chapter 21: Section 2F) These 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." DCR finalizes RMPs following a public process and adoption by the DCR Stewardship Council.

Maura T. Healey, Governor
Kimberley Driscoll, Lieutenant Governor
Rebecca L. Tepper, Secretary
Brian M. Arrigo, Commissioner

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), an agency of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, oversees 450,000 acres of parks and forests, beaches, bike trails, watersheds, dams, parkways, and over 100 National Register listed properties. The agency's mission is to protect, promote, and enhance our common wealth of natural, cultural, and recreational resources for the well-being of all.

DCR honors Indigenous communities for their care, throughout many generations, of the land that DCR now stewards on behalf of the people of the Commonwealth. DCR embraces this legacy of stewardship, fostering a sense of shared responsibility by all people for protection of the waters, lands and living things for the enjoyment and appreciation of all.

To learn more about the DCR, its facilities, and programs please visit us www.mass.gov/dcr. Contact us at mass.parks@state.ma.us.

Freetown-Fall River State Forest

South Region | South Coast District | Fall River Heritage Complex

Park Overview

Date Established	1934
Location	Fall River, Freetown, Lakeville
Landscape Designation (acres)	
Parkland	124.9
Reserve	0
Woodland	6,470.6
Park Size (acres)	6,595.5
Boundary Length (miles)	51.4
Annual Attendance (2020)	15,000
Regulatory Designations (acres)	
Outstanding Resource Waters – Copicut Reservoir	1,285.7
Priority Habitat (MESA)	5,760.3
Surface Water Supply Protection Zone A	282.5
Environmental Justice (acres)	0.0

Long-term Agreements

None Identified — N/A

Concessions

None — N/A

Partners & Friends

Assonet Band of the Wampanoag Nation
Fall River Water Department
Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife
Pilgrim Sands Trail Riders
The Trustees

Features of Interest

- Assonet Band of the Wampanoag Reservation
- CCC historic features
- CCC worker statue
- Equestrian trails
- Fall River-Freetown Wildlife Management Area
- Off-highway motorcycle/dirt bike trails
- Profile Rock site
- Scenic view at Quarry Ledge
- Spray deck

Activities

- Bicycling, mountain
- Dog Sledding
- Dog Walking, on leash
- Field Day events (sack race, 3-legged race, etc.)
- Fishing, fin fish
- Geotourism (viewing geological landforms)
- Hiking/Walking
- Horseback riding
- Hunting
- Nature study/photography
- OHV use, authorized (motorcycles only)
- Picnicking
- Running/Jogging
- Scenic Vista viewing
- Skiing, cross country
- Snowmobiling
- Snowshoeing
- Wading/spray deck
- Wildlife viewing

Contact Info: 110 Slab Bridge Road, Assonet, MA 02702
https://www.mass.gov/locations/freetown-fall-river-state-forest

Natural Resources

Elevation (feet above sea-level)	42.2–248.2
Water Resources	
Watershed(s)	Buzzards Bay, Mt. Hope Bay, Taunton
Rivers and Streams (miles)	9.8
Open Water (acres)	1.8
Wetlands (acres)	994.0
Certified Vernal Pools (#)	13
Potential Vernal Pools (#)	55
Threatened & Endangered Species	
State-Listed (# Regulatory Species)	10
State-Listed (# Non-Regulatory Species)	4
Federally Listed (#)	0
Forest Cover (acres)	5,583.2
Known Invasive Plants (# species)	
Aquatic	0
Terrestrial	18

Climate Change (By 2070)

Increase in annual days over 90° F	>30
Change in annual maximum daily rainfall (inches)	>10
Massachusetts Coastal Flood Risk Model area of inundation (acres)	N/A

Natural Hazards (Acres)

Flood (1.0%–0.2%-chance)	569.8–834.5
Hurricane Inundation (Cat. 1–4)	N/A

Forest Management

(Objective and Acres Managed, Since 2012)

Reduce the risk and long-term impacts of severe disturbances	34
Sustain fundamental ecological functions	309

Cultural Resources (#)

Archaeological	14
Historic (total #)	8
National Register Listed	0
National Historic Landmark	0

Recreation Resources

Athletic field	1
Comfort station	1
Forest Headquarters	1
Pavilion	1
Picnic areas	2
Shade shelter	1
Spray deck	1
Trail System	1

Roads & Trails

Roads (miles)	
Unpaved	9.9
Paved	3.3
Forest Roads (miles)	
Unpaved	23.7
Paved	0.0
Trails	
Unpaved (miles)	39.5
Paved (miles	0
Unauthorized Trails (miles)	6.7
Trail Density (miles/acre)	0.01
Area of Impact (acres)	3,318.5

Parking

Lots (#)	5
Parking Spaces (#)	116
Accessible (HP)	3
Other	113

Interpretive Programming

(#Programs/#Contacts)

Formal Programming (2020)	
DCR	0/0

INTRODUCTION

Freetown-Fall River State Forest (Freetown-Fall River or the Forest) is located in the municipalities of Freetown, Fall River, and Lakeville, in southern Bristol and western Plymouth Counties. The Forest, like all other DCR properties in the Fall River Heritage Complex, is in the Bristol Lowlands/Narragansett Lowlands Ecoregion. The Forest's location, approximately 40 miles south of Boston and 25 miles east of Providence, Rhode Island, makes it within a one-hour drive of more than three million people. Neighboring properties include protected open space to the south, southeast, north, and northeast; a mixture of commercial and residential development to the west; and residential and unprotected open space elsewhere.

The Forest is on land shaped by generations of Indigenous and non-Indigenous inhabitants. Past and present Indigenous residents embody fluid, relational connections to the places and spaces now known as Freetown-Fall River State Forest. Indigenous groups and individuals, including peoples known as the Pokanoket and the Wampanoag are recorded in available documentation (Native Land Digital 2023) as having relationships to this place over seasons and generations. The Assonet Band of the Wampanoag Nation's reservation is located within the Forest. (See next paragraph for details.) The forested uplands of Freetown are believed to have been used seasonally by Native Americans and the route of the present Slab Bridge Road, which runs through the Forest, is believed to have "served as a focal point of access routes" in the area (Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) 1981*a*). Just north of the Forest were trails believed to have served as connections between Assawompset Pond in Lakeville and the Assonet and Taunton Rivers in Freetown (MHC 1981*b*). Following Native American dispossession, the Town of Freetown was incorporated in 1683, with a portion of Freetown incorporating as Fall River in 1803 (MHC 1981a, 1982). The Town of Lakeville, which had been the west precinct of Middleborough, incorporated in 1853 (MHC 1981b). Freetown-Fall River State Forest was established in 1934 when approximately 923 acres were purchased for the purpose of providing "additional acreage for the economic employment of the Civilian Conservation Corps [CCC]" and an additional 954 acres were obtained through takings (Department of Conservation 1934). Nearly 3,350 acres were acquired for the same purpose the following year. A small, but important acquisition occurred in 1955, when the state purchased approximately 60 acres of land that included Profile Rock, a prominent geological formation with cultural significance. In 2015, 1,119 acres were added to the Forest in Lakeville, an area that remains the focus of DCR land protection efforts.

State legislation and an inter-agency agreement influence the management of two large land tracts within Freetown-Fall River. In 1939, the Massachusetts legislature authorized the establishment of a Native American reservation within the Forest, while withholding for the Commonwealth "complete jurisdiction at all times over the Reservation....and general supervision of the activities carried on within its boundaries" (Massachusetts General Court 1939). Accordingly, a 227.5-acre portion of the Forest was set aside as a Reservation for the Assonet Band of the Wampanoag Nation in 1945. Executive Order No. 126 supported "the concept of Native American self-determination" and directed the Commissioner of the Department of Environmental Management (now DCR) to "insure (sic) that the wishes of the Gay Head Wampanoag and Mashpee Tribes…shall be followed in the management and development of the Wampanoag Reservation within the Fall River-Freetown (sic) State Forest." Since as early as 1965, the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MassWildlife) has managed through informal verbal agreement an 826-acre block of land within the southern portion of the Forest. MassWildlife designated this acreage as the Fall River-Freetown Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and prepared a management plan for the WMA in 1976 (Burrell and Thurlow 1976).

Freetown-Fall River consists of mixed deciduous and coniferous forests that undulate across the hillocks and swamps of Massachusetts' Coastal Plain. A day-use area is located adjacent to the forest headquarters and operations yard. The area features a spray deck for youngsters and picnic tables in an open grove of pine trees. Approximately 40 miles of trails and almost 25 miles of unpaved forests roads are available for a variety of passive and active recreation activities; some are open for the authorized use by two-wheeled OHVs. A historical quarry, known as the Ledge, is a well-known destination for hikers. Freetown-Fall River has several non-contiguous, smaller land parcels, multiple private residential and industrial inholdings, and is crossed by several utility rights-of-way (ROW).

PARK IDENTITY AND SIGNIFICANCE

Freetown-Fall River is a year-round recreation destination that combines distinctive cultural and recreational resources with unique resource protection strategies. It is a key part of ecosystem-level conservation in the Commonwealth, provides for a wide variety of active and passive recreation experiences, and shares the forest with the land's original stewards, the Assonet Band of the Wampanoag Nation. Future uses and development should be consistent with the Forest's role as a component of the Southeastern Massachusetts Bioreserve, with the presence of the Assonet Band of the Wampanoag Nation's reservation and related cultural sites, and with its' identity as a destination for nature-based recreation in southeastern Massachusetts.

Freetown-Fall River State Forest is significant for the following reasons:

- The Forest is part of the Southeastern Massachusetts Bioreserve; the only Bioreserve in the Commonwealth. Established in 2000, the Bioreserve is a multi-partner effort to protect, restore, and enhance the biodiversity of a large-scale ecosystem. Each partner (DCR, MassWildlife, City of Fall River, and The Trustees) manages their own land but works within the context of the Bioreserve Management Plan to facilitate the cooperative management of their adjacent properties (Bioreserve Partners 2003).
- It is the only DCR property with a Native American reservation; that of the Assonet Band of the Wampanoag Nation. The land that is now Freetown-Fall River holds great historical and cultural significance for the Wampanoag Nation.
- It allows for the legal, regulated use of OHVs; one of eight DCR properties in the Commonwealth to have authorized OHV (motorcycle only) trails.
- Freetown-Fall River was the site of two CCC camps (S-77, Company 105 and SP-16, Company 110) and possesses several important structures and features associated with this important government initiative in American history (see Defining Resources and Values).

DEFINING RESOURCES AND VALUES

Resources that define the park are related to its recreational, natural, and historical importance and include:

- 6,596 acres of permanently protected open space within the approximately 16,000-acre Southeastern Massachusetts Bioreserve.
- Day-use area with spray deck, picnic facilities, and athletic field.
- Extensive network of 40 miles of trails and 24 miles of unpaved forests roads for both passive and motorized recreation.
- Historic CCC resources, including the remains of Camp S-77 (chimneys and foundations), an important stone arch bridge (the Ledge Road Bridge), roads and trails, and the most extensive and best-preserved collection of CCC-built fire suppression water holes (31 total) of any state forest in the Commonwealth. The park also contains a monument, the CCC Worker statue, which was dedicated in 2002 to the men who served in the CCC in Massachusetts between 1933 and 1942.
- The Assonet Band of the Wampanoag Nation's Reservation, which provides a protected location for members to gather throughout the year for ceremonies, celebrations, connection with others and to their culture, and relaxation.
- Profile Rock was a natural granite formation that resembled the profile of a human head and was a prominent feature of the Forest until its collapse in 2019. It remains a well-remembered and defining site in the park and remains culturally significant to the Assonet Band.
- The 90-ft-high ledge of a former quarry ("the Ledge") that provides scenic views of the pond below, and forest beyond. (See image on cover.)

INTERPRETIVE THEME

Freetown-Fall River State Forest pays homage to the people who have lived and worked on this land, including Indigenous Peoples who have lived on this land for many millennia, the dedicated workers of the CCC during the Great Depression, and the employees of Fall River Granite Company's quarry located at the Assonet Ledge.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Freetown-Fall River State Forest provides several distinct visitor experiences, including the following:

- **Virtual Visitor Experience.** Potential visitors will find detailed information about Freetown-Fall River on DCR's web site. The Forest has its own web page that provides potential visitors information needed to plan a visit. (https://www.mass.gov/locations/freetown-fall-river-state-forest)
- **Entering the Forest.** Where visitors enter the Forest depends on their intended recreation activity. Most visitors enter via the formal entrance on Slab Bridge Road, Freetown. They are welcomed by large signs identifying the property as both the Forest and the Southeastern Massachusetts Bioreserve. Visitors pass the Forest's fire station and headquarters as they make their way to the day-use area. OHV riders use High Street to access the motorcycle parking lot on Bell Rock Road. There are no amenities at this lot. Once parked, visitors off-load their motorcycles and head out into the forest to enjoy a day of trail riding on designated trails.
- **Day-use Area.** The day-use area features the Forest's main parking area and a variety of amenities. In season, visitors enjoy a day cooling off at the spray deck, make use of one of the many grills and picnic tables to enjoy a meal, use the bathrooms and obtain park information before heading out on the Forest's trails, enjoy a group activity on the athletic field, or gather under the shade of the pavilion or tall white pines.
- **Trail-based Motorized Recreation.** Off-highway motorcycle users come from throughout southern New England to ride the single-track trails in Freetown-Fall River. Riders must park in the designated motorcycle parking lot and are allowed to ride on designated multi-use trails between May and November. In the winter, when suitable snow is present, unpaved roads become a destination for snowmobilers.
- **Trail-based Passive Recreation.** The large network of shared-use trails provides visitors the opportunity to get out on foot, mountain bike, or horseback and explore the Forest; or walk their dog. These trails include the CCC Loop that takes visitors past historic CCC features and the Long Trail leading hikers through much of the southern portion of the forest. The 20-mile-long Bioreserve Loop Trail connects the Forest to properties of other Bioreserve partners.
- **The Ledge**. Visitors hike to the scenic viewing area above Ledge Pond, a former quarry, for beautiful views of the forest and pond. The overlook offers colorful foliage in the fall, snow in the winter, and a continuous green forest canopy in the spring and summer.
- **Hunting.** In the fall, the Forest is a popular destination for deer and pheasant hunting. MassWildlife stocks the WMA with ring-necked pheasants twice per week during hunting season.

THREATS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The following information identifies potential threats to the park's natural and cultural resources and identifies opportunities to enhance their protection and stewardship. Although not considered a resource under statute (M.G.L. Part I, Title II, Chapter 21, Sections 2F), recreation is also included below because it is an important part of the park-going experience, helps define a park's values, and is a key part assessing the consistency of activities taking place in the Commonwealth's forests, parks, and reservations.

Threats and opportunities identified below are used to inform the development of management recommendations. Potential recommendations must meet prioritization criteria to be included in the Priority Recommendations table, page 20.

Natural Resources

Threats

- Activities within the two Zone I Wellhead Protection Areas near the forest headquarters, such as the storage of vehicles, equipment, and materials, are inconsistent with Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) guidance and best management practices for wellhead protection (DEP 2011 and DEP 1995, respectively).
- Vernal pools are sensitive to changes in precipitation and hydrology and are therefore likely to be impacted by climate change.
- Widening of roads and trails, due to stormwater management issues, is threatening wetlands and other sensitive resource areas.
- Trail users avoid low, wet, muddy areas. In doing so they widen and braid trails, threatening wetlands and other sensitive resource areas.
- OHV use outside of designated areas and off designated trails has caused rutting and erosion, leading to sedimentation in wetlands and streams. Enforcement is difficult due to park size, number of access points, and staff availability.
- The NHESP has identified OHV use as a threat to four of the Forest's state-listed species. These species may be negatively impacted by OHV use off of authorized trails.
- Four of the Forest's state-listed species are associated with wetlands and are sensitive to changes in hydrology. They are threatened by activities that affect water levels and are exposed to the effects of climate change.
- The Forest's examples of the Coastal Atlantic White Cedar Swamp natural community are vulnerable to changes in hydrology and are likely to be exposed to climate change (MassWildlife 2016).
- Developmental pressures from abutting properties and potential encroachments around the perimeter of the Forest are increasing the number of access points, unauthorized trails, and dumping.
- Depreciative after-hours behavior and dumping of trash is detrimental to all types of resources in the Forest.
- Invasive, hardwood-defoliating insects such as spongy moth, winter moth, and tent caterpillar have had a historic and continued presence in the forest. These pests have resulted in the death of several thousand oaks.
- The South Region Invasive Plant Management Plan (BSC Group 2017) identified a high density of invasive plants at Doctor's Mill Pond. Small pockets of invasive plants were reported at the Ledge, near the Forest Headquarters, within the utility ROW in the northern and eastern parts of the forest, and along some forest roads and trails. If unmanaged, these plants have the potential to degrade the forest's natural communities.

Opportunities

- Natural Resource, Water Resource, and Land Protection and Stewardship goals presented in the Bioreserve Management Plan (Bioreserve Partners 2003) provide a conceptual framework for conservation efforts in the Forest and other Bioreserve properties. They provide the opportunity for broader, landscape-level resource management. Continuing to work with Bioreserve partners to implement the Bioreserve Management Plan's goals will contribute to the Bioreserve's mission to protect, restore, and enhance the ecosystem.
- Suitable habitat exists in the Forest for four additional species of state-listed invertebrates. Surveying for these species may confirm their presence in the Forest.
- Relocating vehicles, equipment, dumpsters, and materials storage outside of the Zone 1 Wellhead Protection area could help protect drinking water supplies.
- Engaging with utility ROW owners on management of invasive species could reduce the spread of these plants.
- Engaging with utility ROW owners about installing gates or other physical barriers could help limit unauthorized access and reduce OHV use, dumping, and fires.

- Providing comment when abutting development plans go through MEPA and/or Conservation Commission reviews could help minimize encroachment into the Forest.
- Increased presence of park staff, DCR Rangers, and Massachusetts Environmental Police could discourage depreciative activity and increase resource protection.
- Implementing stormwater management techniques could improve the condition of the forest roads and trails and decrease impacts on wetlands and other sensitive resources.
- Continued implementation of the Invasive Plant Management Plan (BSC Group 2017) could help control the spread of invasive plants.
- Encouraging research in the Forest, particularly the monitoring of rare species and natural resources inventories, would generate information beneficial to the management of natural resources.
- Some of the 55 potential vernal pools may provide additional breeding habitat for the Forest's amphibians. Surveying and certifying these pools (MassWildlife 2009), as appropriate, may help better protect these animals.
- Formalizing the verbal agreement with MassWildlife for management of the Fall River-Freetown WMA would clarify duties and responsibilities.
- Expanding the geographic and temporal scope of forest management, including prescribed burns, in the Forest would further promote rare pine barrens species and habitat restoration efforts, while decreasing the likelihood of wildfires and increasing the resistance and resilience of trees and forests to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change. In southeastern portions of the Commonwealth, such as at Freetown, snowfall is typically later in the winter and day-time temperatures and other fire/smoke management weather parameters are conducive for prescribed fire activities deep into the fall and early winter.
- There is an opportunity to expand post-Prescribed Fire Monitoring to quantify burn results and related benefits. Resulting data may then be applied to adaptive management of the Forest.
- There is an opportunity to offer more home fuelwood harvesting of downed trees to contribute to habitat management objectives.
- Preparation of an interpretive plan for the Forest would better communicate to the public the significance of Freetown-Fall River's natural resources, contribute to the protection of these resources, guide stewardship messaging and interpretive treatments, and help meet the Natural Resource Goals outlined in the Bioreserve Management Plan (Bioreserve Partners 2003).

Cultural Resources

Threats

- There is no formal agreement for the management of the Assonet Band of the Wampanoag Nation's Reservation.
- Structures within the Wampanoag Reservation have been vandalized with racist graffiti and litter. There are no signs within this area indicating to visitors that they are in the Assonet Band's Reservation and that the area should be treated with respect.
- The Profile Rock site, which remains culturally significant to the Wampanoag Nation, is used for inappropriate forms of recreation such as radio-controlled car use. The site has not been formally inventoried as a cultural resource.
- Visitors light fires in extant CCC chimneys. This potentially damages these resources and increases the potential for wildfire.
- The CCC-built Ledge Road Bridge, a historic, single-span, stone and steel arch bridge over Rattlesnake Brook, is in poor condition and might not be suitable for heavy vehicles (Berg 1998). Vehicle damage or inappropriate repair or rehabilitation of the road and/or bridge could threaten the historical integrity of this structure, particularly the distinctive stonework.

- Approximately 12.6% of the Forest is within the 0.2%-chance flood zone. The CCC water holes, Ledge Road Bridge, other historic features, and archaeological sites might be affected by changes in water level.
- Unauthorized OHV use and riding OHVs off authorized trails has the potential to damage sensitive cultural resources such as CCC water holes. Enforcement is difficult due to park size and staff availability.
- Stormwater management issues on the roads and trails lead visitors to widen roads and trails to avoid low, wet, muddy, and rocky areas. This widening of roads and trails threatens historic CCC features such as the water holes.

Opportunities

- An opportunity exists to further "support the concept of Native American self-determination" (Executive Order 126) by ensuring that the wishes of the Aquinnah Wampanoag and Mashpee Wampanoag tribes, as expressed by their governing bodies, are incorporated into the management of the portion of Forest in which the Reservation is located.
- The presence of the Assonet Band of the Wampanoag Nation's Reservation within the Forest creates opportunities to work collaboratively to protect culturally significant areas and resources, both on and off the Reservation, and to interpret the Forest's story from a more comprehensive point of view.
- Increased communication and cooperation between DCR and the Assonet Band of the Wampanoag Nation can help avoid negative impacts to the Reservation by DCR and public activities elsewhere in the Forest.
- Listing the CCC water holes and Ledge Road Bridge, along with significant CCC resources at other DCR properties, in the National Register of Historic Places would increase public recognition of these important resources and help to preserve them.
- Preparation of an interpretive plan for the Forest would better communicate to the public the significance of Freetown-Fall River's cultural resources, contribute to the protection of these resources, guide stewardship messaging and interpretive treatments, and help meet the Cultural Resource Goals outlined in the Bioreserve Management Plan (Bioreserve Partners 2003).
- Increased staffing would allow for more of a DCR presence in the Forest and help to discourage depreciative activity.
- Implementing stormwater management techniques could improve the condition of the forest roads and trails thereby protecting CCC features by having visitors stay on trails.
- The cemetery on Payne Road, Freetown (i.e., Paine Family Cemetery or State Forest Cemetery, MHC # FRE.814) is poorly documented. Opportunities exist to further document this site and to develop management strategies for its preservation.
- Continuing to work with Bioreserve partners to implement Cultural Resource goals from the Bioreserve Management Plan (Bioreserve Partners 2003) will contribute to the mission of the Bioreserve to permanently protect cultural resources.

Recreation

Threats

- The Forest's operations area is contiguous with its day use area; there is no identifiable separation between the two. Upon entering the forest, visitors must pass by the fire station, forest headquarters, employee parking, equipment storage, and dumpsters to get to the road to the day-use area. This creates an initial impression of entering an industrial area rather than a park.
- There is no formal operations yard or maintenance garage. Equipment is stored and maintained in the open, and it is difficult to store materials such as aggregate, lumber, and loam for use in maintaining trails and roads.
- The Forest Headquarters building, and the fire station are in poor condition.

- There are few Internal Park Information Signs to guide visitors from the Forest entrance to the day-use area.
- The main kiosk in the day use area lacks a Welcome Wayside panel.
- The trails system lacks adequate markings and signs to meet DCR's standards (DCR 2019) and user-created trails are common. Each year the combination of confusing trails and insufficient information contributes to visitors getting lost.
- Motorcycle parking lots lack designated accessible parking.
- Trail density within the Woodland portion of the Forest (0.013 miles/acre) is consistent with recommended trail densities. However, trail density within the Parkland portion of the Forest (0.030 miles/acre) is in excess of recommended trail density (DCR 2019).
- Despite many of the Forest's trails being open to authorized OHV use, illegal OHV use on passive recreation trails and elsewhere remains a common problem. Illegal OHV activity causes safety issues for other trail users and results in extensive trail damage. Enforcement is difficult due to the park's large size and staff availability.
- User-created trails near wetlands and other sensitive resource areas may cause erosion and trample vegetation. Significantly eroded trails likely encourage further unauthorized trail creation.
- Over 7,200 feet of trails are subject to 1.0%-chance flood events and an additional 5,130 feet are subject to 0.2%-chance flood events.
- Geocaches are common in the Freetown-Fall River. Many are positioned along trails as well as in sensitive areas such as wetlands and near vernal pools. Geocachers accessing these locations may create social trails and directly impact sensitive resources.
- Newly developed authorized OHV trails in the Wildlife Management Area in the southeast corner of the property could conflict with hunting in this area and create safety issues.
- Stormwater management issues are damaging unpaved forest roads. Although the roads have undergone major improvements, park staff lacks the equipment to maintain these roads in their desired condition. This negatively impacts the visitor experience, slows park operations and fire control travel, and increases emergency services response times.
- There is extensive graffiti, particularly on the Ledge, which creates an unwelcoming environment to visitors.
- The Ledge is the site of illegal swimming and jumping from the rock wall into the pond below. Signs put up to discourage these activities have been repeatedly stolen or vandalized.
- Developmental pressures from abutting properties and encroachments around the perimeter of the property are impacting the Forest by increasing the number of access points, unauthorized trails, and dumping.
- There is not enough full-time staff to have a consistent presence in the Forest. This has contributed to the Forest becoming a magnet for after-hours activity, which in turn contributes to an unwelcome environment for visitors and damage to the Forest's resources.
- The forests of Freetown-Fall River, and the Southeastern MA Bioreserve more broadly, have an undeserved association with the supernatural (Medeiros 2021). This association may discourage some people from exploring the Forest.

Opportunities

- Visitor Experience goals presented in the Bioreserve Management Plan (Bioreserve Partners 2003) provide a framework for recreation activities in the Forest and other Bioreserve properties. A Visitor Experience and Interpretive Plan, developed within the framework of the Bioreserve Management Plan, would provide a unified approach to communicating with the public about the Forest's resources, recreational opportunities, and wayfinding.
- Creating and implementing a site plan for the day-use area could help to unify the visual and programmatic aspects of the facility and thus create a more cohesive and welcoming recreation area.

- The new spray deck that is being installed to replace the wading pool offers opportunities for expanded, accessible recreation and increased visitation to the Forest.
- Opportunities exist to expand recreation opportunities at the day use area through the establishment of additional family-centric facilities (e.g., playground) and activities.
- Establishment of a secure operations yard would allow staff to securely store maintenance equipment and materials.
- Increased staffing would allow for more of a DCR presence in the Forest and help to discourage depreciative activity.
- Increasing universal access by creating more accessible parking, trails, and facilities would help DCR achieve its mission to protect, promote, and enhance our common wealth of…recreational resources for the well-being of all.
- Preparation of an interpretive plan for the Forest would better communicate to the public the significance of Freetown-Fall River's resources, contribute to the protection of these resources, and help implement Visitor Experience Goals outlined in the Bioreserve Management Plan (Bioreserve Partners 2003).
- Installing gates at all places where forest roads and trails meet a public road could help deter unauthorized OHV access, dumping, and other depreciative behavior.
- Assessing the trails' location, condition, and use levels; applying Best Practices (DCR 2019); and creating a trails plan would improve the Forest's trails system for all users and cut down on the use and creation of user-created trails.
- Expansion of the Forest into the Chace Road, Freetown-Howland Road, Lakeville area created opportunities for additional passive trail-based recreation.
- Encouraging the continued participation of the Pilgrim Sands Trail Riders in the maintenance of OHV trails and encouraging participation from other groups in the Adopt-a-Trail Program could help improve the trail system and combat undesired trail behavior.
- Increased outreach, education, and enforcement could help reduce the incidence of illegal OHV use in the Forest.
- The Town of Dartmouth's 2018 acquisition of the High Hill Conservation Area completed a continuous sequence of protected open space parcels between the Southeastern Massachusetts Bioreserve and Acushnet Cedar Swamp State Reservation. This creates the opportunity for DCR to work with partners to establish a continuous trails system between the two DCR properties and to use them to anchor this trails system.
- Implementing stormwater management techniques could improve the condition of the forest roads and trails and prevent user-created widening of forest roads and trails.
- The Friends of the Freetown-Fall River State Forest group recently disbanded, there is an opportunity to help revive this group or support the establishment of a new friends group.
- There is an opportunity for park staff to work with geocachers to ensure that geocaches are placed in locations away from sensitive natural and cultural resources.
- A visitor center/discovery center for the Southeastern Massachusetts Bioreserve has been proposed since its establishment in 2002. Creation of the center would help increase awareness of the Forest, its resources, and associated recreational opportunities.

Climate Change

Climate change impacts nearly every aspect of DCR's properties, from ecosystem health, to infrastructure, to recreation. The Department is actively working to mitigate and adapt to current and future impacts through such actions as forest management, decarbonizing DCR's buildings and vehicles, protecting wetlands, and using nature-based solutions to minimize stormwater impacts. Information on these, and other, efforts is incorporated into RMPs as available and appropriate.

DCR manages its forests to provide a range of ecosystem services such as recreation, clean water, wood commodities, and wildlife habitat (DCR 2020). For ecosystems under its management, DCR carefully considers both their vulnerability to climate change and their ability to mitigate the effects of climate change by storing carbon in ecosystems and harvested wood products. Several approaches are used to monitor DCR forests and to design forest management strategies to adapt to climate change and provide ecosystem services. (See Swanston et al. (2016) for information on adaptation strategies and approaches associated with DCR's forest management.) Established in 1957, DCR's Continuous Forest Inventory System (CFI) uses a network of more than 2,000 permanent plots on which repeated measurements are taken on an ongoing basis. The CFI measures the status, size, and health of over 100,000 trees; other vegetation; down woody material; and the forest floor. (See DCR 2014 for additional information on the CFI System.) This information helps DCR understand at a strategic scale the current character, condition, and trends of forest ecosystems under its care. DCR also uses operational inventory to help plan specific treatments and evaluate their outcomes. Using these different scales of information, remotely sensed data, and local and regional external expertise, DCR plans projects that help its stands, forests, and other lands adapt to climate change and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions. For additional information on the relationship between DCR's forest management practices and climate change, please see pages 77–85 in *Massachusetts Forest Action Plan 2020* (DCR 2020) and Managing Our Forests…For Carbon Benefits (https://www.mass.gov/info-details/managing-our-forests-for-carbon-benefits).

The Department is actively assessing the vulnerability of its properties and facilities to the anticipated impacts of climate change. A Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment (CCVA) will be used by DCR to enhance park operations and maintenance, inform resilient investment, and provide a framework for hazard mitigation and climate adaptation for natural resources, cultural resources, buildings, facilities, and other infrastructure. Property-specific climate change information derived from the CCVA is included in the RMP dashboard (see Climate Change (by 2070)).

Climate Exposure

During the preparation of Resource Management Plans some resources may be identified as having particularly high exposure to the anticipated impacts of climate change. When this occurs, these resources are described in the RMP.

Climate exposure in the Forest is associated with the Forest's wetlands and vernal pools. Coastal Atlantic White Cedar Swamps are sensitive to changes in hydrology, and any changes to their natural hydroperiod threatens the persistence of this community type (Swain 2020). Changes in precipitation may also affect the hydroperiod of vernal pools, which in turn would affect vernal pool obligate species.

It is the position of the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program that state-listed species and Priority Natural Communities are likely to be highly sensitive to the anticipated impacts of climate change and that all state-listed species will be negatively affected by hydrologic changes, changes in water, soil, and air temperature, and changes in forest composition.

Applied Land Stewardship Zoning

DCR assesses the appropriate uses and stewardship of its properties at two spatial scales: the landscape level and the property level.

Landscape Designation

In 2012, DCR engaged in a comprehensive system-wide assessment of lands managed by its Division of State Parks and Recreation, designating them as Reserve, Woodland, or Parkland. (See Landscape Designations for DCR Parks & Forests: Selection Criteria and Management Guidelines (DCR 2012) for details.) Multiple Landscape Designations may apply to parks with diverse resources and levels of development. 6,470.6 acres of Freetown-Fall River State Forest were designated Woodland, and 124.9 acres were designated Parkland. Identification of Land Stewardship Zones within Freetown-Fall River State Forest was performed in the context of Woodland and Parkland Landscape Designations.

The following Land Stewardship Zoning is recommended to guide management and any future development. (See Land Stewardship Zoning map, page 17.)

Zone 1

Zone 1 areas have highly sensitive ecological and/or cultural resources that require additional management approaches and practices to protect and preserve these special features and their values (DCR 2012). The following areas of Freetown-Fall River State Forest have been designated Zone 1.

- An approximately 120-acre area on the east side of the Forest that is being managed to restore a pitch pine-oak forest/woodland with areas of pine barrens. Six Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA) listed species occur in this zone, including four species of invertebrates that are only known from this section of the Forest.

Zone 2

Zone 2 areas provide for a balance between resource stewardship and recreational opportunities that can be appropriately sustained. They include stable yet important cultural and natural resources. These areas provide a buffer for sensitive resources, recharge areas for surface and groundwaters, and large areas where existing public recreation activities can be managed at sustainable levels (DCR 2012). The following areas of Freetown-Fall River State Forest have been designated Zone 2.

- All areas of the Forest not specifically designated Zone 1 or 3.

Zone 3

Zone 3 areas include altered landscapes in active use and areas suitable for future administrative, maintenance, and recreation areas (DCR 2012). The following areas of Freetown-Fall River State Forest are currently developed, appropriate for potential future development, or intensively used for recreation. They have been designated Zone 3.

- Forest headquarters, fire station, and adjacent day-use area.
- The off-highway motorcycle parking lot on Bell Rock Road, including the existing footprint and a 100-foot buffer around its north, south, and west sides to allow for potential future expansion.
- Parking areas C (Copicut Road at Grinnell Path) and D (Copicut Road at Clark Field Path), as designated on the published DCR Trail Map.
- Profile Rock parking area and entrance way.

Significant Feature Overlay

Significant Feature Overlays provide precise management guidance to maintain or preserve recognized resources features regardless of the zone in which they occur. The following Significant Feature Overlays were developed for Freetown-Fall River:

- **Assonet Band of the Wampanoag Nation Reservation Overlay.** This overlay includes the entirety of the 227-acre Reservation. In accordance with Executive Order No. 126 (1976), all management guidance developed for this Reservation must ensure that the wishes of the Aquinnah Wampanoag and Mashpee Wampanoag Tribes, as expressed by their governing bodies, are followed. Because of this, DCR has not applied Land Stewardship Zoning within this overlay.
- **Bioreserve Overlay.** This overlay includes the entire Freetown-Fall River State Forest. Activities within this area need to be consistent with the goals presented in the Southeastern Massachusetts Bioreserve Management Plan (Bioreserve Partners 2003).
- **Off-Highway Vehicle Trails Overlay.** This overlay follows the center line of trails currently authorized for OHV use and extends outward to the limits of the preexisting roadbed or trail (i.e., it does not include areas expanded by OHV use). Special trail management activities are associated with the trails in this overlay.

- **Surface Water Supply Protection Zone A Overlay.** Land uses and activities within this overlay should be consistent with Massachusetts' Drinking Water Regulations to protect surface water supplies. Refer to 310 CMR 22.20B and 310 CMR 22.20C for specific guidance.
- **Wellhead Protection Overlay.** This overlay includes the two Zone I Wellhead Protection Areas near the Forest Headquarters. Within this overlay, activities should be consistent with Wellhead Protection Tips (DEP 1995) and DEP Guidance (DEP 2011).
- **Wildlife Management Area Overlay.** The 826-acre area in the southeast corner of the Forest managed by MassWildlife under verbal agreement. Additional information on this area is available in the Fall River-Freetown Wildlife Management Area Plan (MassWildlife 1976).

DCR Stewardship Map Tool

This RMP should be viewed in conjunction with DCR's Stewardship Map, a GIS-based tool that allows users to view a property's natural, cultural, and recreational resources. The Stewardship Map tool is dynamic, and information continues to be updated after adoption of an RMP. Guidance for using the tool, as well as Best Management Practices for resource stewardship, are located on the Stewardship Map site: https://dcrsgis-mass-eoeea.hub.arcgis.com/.

Because authorized trails are located within State-Listed Species Habitat on this property, managers should consult an additional GIS-based tool, the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) 2022 Guidance Codes for DCR Trail Maintenance Map. (https://mass-eoeea.maps.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=cb252e8df40d408c81fe8fcf690e14f6) This tool allows users to select specific trail segments and identify restrictions and regulatory review associated with performing 10 common trail maintenance activities on these segments. Because site-specific rare species information is confidential under Massachusetts law (M.G.L. c. 66 §17D), access to this tool is restricted.

Consistency Review

Resource Management Plans "shall ensure consistency between recreation, resource protection, and sustainable forest management" (M.G.L. Part 1, Title II, Chapter 21, Section 2F). For planning purposes, an activity is considered consistent with resource protection if it has no significant, long-term, adverse impact on resources. To this end, a series of indicators were developed to evaluate the impacts of recreation and forest management on natural and cultural resources.

Many activities with the potential to negatively affect resources are already subject to agency and/or regulatory review (e.g., forest management activities, projects within Priority Habitat). For these activities, compliance with state regulations, regulatory authority guidance, DCR policies and processes, and Best Management Practices (BMPs) is considered an indicator of consistency between park use and resource protection. New indicators were generated for activities not subject to agency or regulatory review, and are based on available data, information readily identifiable via aerial imagery or site visits, assessments by DCR subject matter experts, or the property manager's knowledge of park conditions and use. (See Consistency Assessment, page 18.)

Indicators are applied during the RMP planning process to ensure a standardized assessment of consistency across all properties in the DCR system. Inconsistencies identified via the application of indicators are used to inform the development of management recommendations.

The status of indicators (Yes, No, and N/A) were accurate at the time this RMP was prepared and were used for planning purposes. ***However, they represent a snapshot in time and may not reflect future conditions.*** In addition, the status of indicators will change as recommendations get implemented.

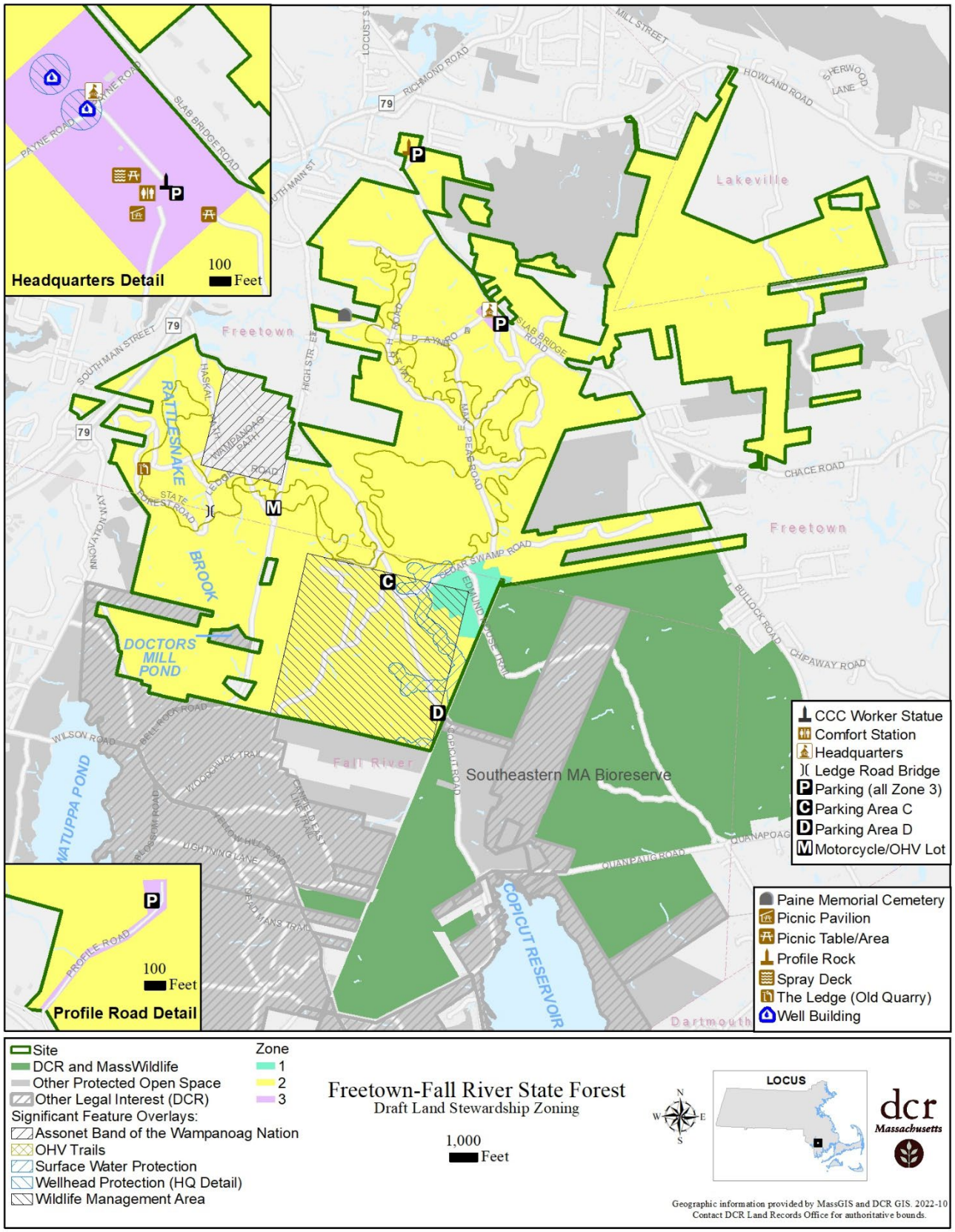
Management Recommendations

Thirty-two priority management recommendations were developed for Freetown-Fall River State Forest. They are presented in the table Priority Recommendations for Freetown-Fall River State Forest, page 20. All recommendations are of equal importance.

Priority management recommendations derive from Threats, Opportunities, and Consistency Assessment information presented in this RMP. For a recommendation to be considered a priority and listed in the table, it must meet one or more of the criteria listed below. Maintenance and management needs not meeting one or more of these criteria are not included in the table but are identified in the Threats and Opportunities sections.

The following types of recommendations are considered priority:

- Natural resource stewardship and restoration activities consistent with park identity and intended to improve ecological function and connectivity.
- Cultural resource management activities consistent with park identity and intended to prevent the loss of integrity of significant cultural resources.
- Improvements consistent with park identity that are needed to support intended park activities.
- Actions required for regulatory compliance or compliance with legal agreements.
- Activities that prevent or ameliorate threats to the health and safety of park visitors and employees.
- Activities that address inconsistencies among recreation, resource protection, and sustainable forest management, as identified through use of the Consistency Assessment checklist.


Headquarters Detail
100 Feet
Profile Road Detail
100 Feet
Freetown
Fall River
Lakeville
Dartmouth
Southeastern MA Bioreserve
RATTLESNAKE BROOK
DOCTORS MILL POND
COPICUT RESERVOIR
WATUPPA POND
SOUTH MAIN STREET
SLAB BRIDGE ROAD
CHACE ROAD
CHIPAWAY ROAD
CCC Worker Statue
Comfort Station
Headquarters
Ledge Road Bridge
Parking (all Zone 3)
Parking Area C
Parking Area D
Motorcycle/OHV Lot
Paine Memorial Cemetery
Picnic Pavilion
Picnic Table/Area
Profile Rock
Spray Deck
The Ledge (Old Quarry)
Well Building
Site
DCR and MassWildlife
Other Protected Open Space
Other Legal Interest (DCR)
Significant Feature Overlays:
Assonet Band of the Wampanoag Nation
OHV Trails
Surface Water Protection
Wellhead Protection (HQ Detail)
Wildlife Management Area
Zone
1
2
3
Freetown-Fall River State Forest
Draft Land Stewardship Zoning
1,000 Feet
LOCUS
dcr Massachusetts
Geographic information provided by MassGIS and DCR GIS. 2022-10
Contact DCR Land Records Office for authoritative bounds.

CONSISTENCY ASSESSMENT *This assessment represents a snapshot in time and may not reflect future conditions.*	**Yes**	**No**	**N/A**
Landscape Designation			
G.1. All development and uses of the park since 2012, or currently planned for the park, are consistent with its Landscape Designation(s).	X		
Natural Resources			
N1. All projects (normal maintenance activities, special projects, volunteer projects) conducted within Priority Habitat were reviewed and approved through DCR's internal review process and by NHESP for potential impacts to rare species and their habitats.		X	
N2. All projects conducted within areas subject to state and/or federal wetlands or waterways regulations were reviewed and approved through DCR's internal review process; reviewed and approved through the appropriate, local, state, and/or federal review process; and were carried out in accordance with the terms of a valid permit.		X	
N3. Sensitive resource areas, such as steep slopes, riverbanks, streambanks, pond and lakeshores, wetlands, and dunes are free of desire paths and other user-created trails.		X	
N4. Aquatic areas adjacent to beaches, boat ramps and launches, roads, and hiking trails are free of eroded sediments.			X
N5. The extent of exposed soil in campground and/or picnic sites is stable or decreasing.*	X		
N6. The extent of native vegetation in campground and/or picnic sites is stable or increasing.*	X		
N7. Area of trail impacts in Reserves is less than 50% of total park area. (See Naughton (2021) for information on primary area of trail impacts.)			X
N8. Congregations of breeding, migratory, or wintering wildlife are protected from disturbance by temporary (e.g., seasonal) restrictions on recreational access.		X	
N9. Geocaches, letterboxes, orienteering control locations, and other discovery destinations are located outside sensitive natural resource areas and their locations have been reviewed and approved by park personnel.*		X	
N10. Zone I wellhead protection areas are free of vehicle parking, chemical storage, or concentrated recreation.		X	
N11. All boat ramps and launches have cleaning stations and/or educational signs and materials on preventing the spread of aquatic invasive organisms.*			X
N12. For each barrier beach there is a current, approved Barrier Beach Management Plan and all beach-related activities are conducted in accordance with this plan.			X
Cultural Resources			
C1. All maintenance activities and projects with the potential to cause sub-surface disturbance are being reviewed by the DCR archaeologist for potential impacts to archaeological resources.	X		
C2. All maintenance activities and projects affecting historic properties (buildings, structures, and landscapes over 50-years-old) are being reviewed by the Office of Cultural Resources to avoid adverse impacts.	X		
C3. Historic buildings, structures, and landscapes are being used, maintained, and repaired in a manner that preserves their cultural integrity and conveys their historic significance to park visitors.		X	
C4. Recreational activities such as hiking, biking, and boating are not eroding cultural properties such as archaeological sites or historic landscapes through creation of desire lines, rutting in the landscape, damage to historic built features, or excessive scouring (erosion) of coastal and shoreline areas.		X	
C5. Geocaches, letterboxes, and other discovery destinations are located away from sensitive cultural resources, and their locations have been reviewed and approved by park personnel.		X	
C6. Historic buildings, structures, landscapes, archaeological sites, and concentrations of historic resources are located outside of areas predicted to be subject to flooding, storm surge, or sea-level rise.		X	

Consistency Assessment continues on next page.

CONSISTENCY ASSESSMENT *This assessment represents a snapshot in time and may not reflect future conditions.*	**Yes**	**No**	**N/A**
Recreation			
R1. Types of recreation, levels of recreational use, and types and extent of recreation infrastructure are consistent with the park's identity statement.		X	
R2. Trail density is consistent with the park's Landscape Designation(s). (See *Trails Guidelines and Best Practices Manual* (DCR 2019) for density thresholds.)		X	
R3. All authorized trail construction was performed in accordance with an approved Trail Proposal Form.		X	
R4. Over 90% of the park's official trails network is classified as being in Fair or better condition.		X	
R5. Recurring use by OHVs is restricted to authorized trails.*		X	
R6. There is a high level of compliance with dog leash regulations and policies.*	X		
R7. Athletic fields are free of recreation-caused impacts (e.g., bare spots) to turf.*		X	
R8. Water-based recreation is consistent with: "Uses Attained" designation as identified by Mass DEP in its most current list of integrated waters (e.g., DEP 2021); DPH fish consumption advisories; and/or water quality testing at waterfront areas.	X		
R9. Recreation facilities are located outside of areas subject to flooding, storm surge, or sea-level rise.		X	
Sustainable Forest Management			
F1. Forestry activities are consistent with Landscape Designation and associated forestry guidelines.	X		
F 2. Forestry activities are consistent with current Forest Resource Management Plan.			X
F3. Tree cutting is performed in accordance with an approved cutting plan, if required under the Massachusetts Forest Cutting Practices Act (M.G.L. Ch. 132, Sections 40–46).	X		

***** *As assessed by property manager*.

Priority recommendations for Freetown-Fall River State Forest. All recommendations are of equal importance.

Category	Recommendation	Implementation[a]
Natural Resources	Review materials storage practices in Forest Headquarters area; relocate vehicles, equipment, and any hazardous substances (e.g., gasoline, motor oil, antifreeze, oil-based paints, deicers) outside of the Zone 1 Wellhead Protection Area. Assess the potential for creating a safe and enclosed storage area for maintenance equipment and materials that is outside of the Zone 1 Wellhead Protection Area.	**Park Operations**
Natural Resources	Assess the potential for acquiring equipment needed for staff to maintain roads and trails.	**Forest Fire Control, Park Operations**
Natural Resources	Implement stormwater management techniques to improve the condition of the forest roads and trails.	**Forest Fire Control, Park Operations,** Volunteers
Natural Resources	Continue to implement the Invasive Plant Management Plan (BSC Group 2017) and coordinate with the NHESP, Mass Wildlife, and Bioreserve partners on invasives management in priority areas.	Contractor, **Office of Natural Resources,** Park Operations, Partner
Natural Resources	Survey, document, and submit documentation to certify potential vernal pools, in accordance with MassWildlife (2009), as warranted.	**Office of Natural Resources,** Volunteers
Natural Resources	Update and formalize the agreement with the MassWildlife for the management of the Fall River-Freetown WMA.	Office of the General Counsel, **Park Operations,** Partner
Natural Resources	Continue joint DCR-MassWildlife pine barren restoration efforts in the southeast section of Forest; expand to other areas in Forest, as appropriate.	**Forest Fire Control,** Partner
Natural Resources	Continue to work with Bioreserve partners to update and implement Natural Resource goals contained in the Bioreserve Management Plan (Bioreserve Partners 2003) to further the Bioreserve's mission to protect, restore, and enhance the ecosystem.	Forest Fire Control, Office of Natural Resources, **Park Operations**, Partner
Natural Resources	Prepare a Forest Resource Management Plan for DCR's Southeast Forestry District.	**Management Forestry**
Cultural Resources	Convene a meeting with representatives of the Massachusetts Commission on Indian Affairs and governing bodies of the Aquinnah Wampanoag and Mashpee Wampanoag Tribes, and the Assonet Band of the Wampanoag Nation to discuss management issues within the Reservation (e.g., Land Stewardship Zoning, management of the CCC Camp).	Office of Cultural Resources, Office of the General Counsel, **Park Operations,** Partner
Cultural Resources	As mutually agreeable, meet with representatives of the Aquinnah Wampanoag, Mashpee Wampanoag, and Assonet Band of the Wampanoag Nation to identify ways to incorporate tribal knowledge and perspective into issues related to managing and interpreting portions of the Forest outside of the Reservation, such as the Profile Rock area.	Interpretive Services, **Park Operations**, Office of Cultural Resources, Office of Natural Resources**,** Partner
Cultural Resources	Continue to work with Bioreserve partners to implement Cultural Resource goals from the Bioreserve Management Plan to further the mission of the Bioreserve to permanently protect cultural resources.	**Office of Cultural Resources, Park Operations,** Partner

Category	Recommendation	Implementation[a]
Cultural Resources	Evaluate and implement strategies to deter the public from using CCC fireplaces. When maintaining fireplaces and other stone features at CCC camp, follow DCR Best Management Practices: "Stone Walls" and "Historic Landscapes – Built Features."	Office of Cultural Resources, **Park Operations**
Cultural Resources	Increase public recognition of significant CCC resources (the water holes and Ledge Road Bridge) through a statewide thematic nomination of CCC resources to the National Register of Historic Places. Consult with the Massachusetts Historical Commission, as necessary. Follow DCR Best Management Practices: "Water Holes," "Stone Walls," and "Historic Landscapes – Built Features" when conducting routine maintenance on these structures.	Consultant, **Office of Cultural Resources**
Cultural Resources	Update historical evaluation (the current MHC Form F-Bridge form is over 20 years old), and conduct engineering evaluation of, the Ledge Road Bridge. Ascertain if interim stabilization is required. Preserve, rehabilitate, or restore the structure in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.	Facilities Engineering, **Office of Cultural Resources,** Park Operations
Cultural Resources	As mutually agreeable, work with the Aquinnah Wampanoag, Mashpee Wampanoag, and Assonet Band of the Wampanoag Nation to conduct a formal survey and National Register evaluation of Profile Rock.	**Office of Cultural Resources,** Park Operations, Partner
Cultural Resources	In partnership with local historical society or other interested party, conduct survey of Payne Cemetery (MHC #FRE.814) and develop a management strategy for this resource.	**Office of Cultural Resources**, Park Operations, Partner
Recreation	Prepare a site plan for the day-use area to create a more cohesive and welcoming recreation facility, improve the visitor experience, and visually and physically separate the day-use and park operations areas.	**Landscape Architecture Section**
Recreation	Install Internal Park Information Signs between main park entrance and day-use area.	**Park Operations**
Recreation	Develop and install a Welcome Wayside Pane on the day use area's main kiosk.	**Interpretive Services, Park Operations**
Recreation	Install a playground in the day use area.	**Landscape Architecture Section**
Recreation	Assess the opportunity to increase staffing and Ranger presence in the Forest to discourage depreciative activity and make the Forest a more welcoming place for all visitors.	**Bureau of Ranger Services, Park Operations**
Recreation	Develop a comprehensive Trails Plan consistent with DCR Trails Guidelines and Best Practices (DCR 2019) and guidance in the Bioreserve Management Plan (Bioreserve Partners 2003) to enhance resource protection and improve the visitor experience for all trail-based recreationists.	Park Operations, **Trails and Greenways Section**, Universal Access Program
Recreation	Install gates at all locations where forest roads and trails meet public roads to reduce unauthorized OHV use, dumping of trash, and after-hours entry.	**Park Operations**

Category	Recommendation	Implementation[a]
Recreation	Establish designated accessible (HP) parking spaces in all motorcycle parking lots.	**Park Operations, Universal Access Program**
Recreation	Manage trails in accordance with DCR Best Practices (DCR 2019).	**Park Operations,** Trails and Greenways Section
Recreation	Encourage the continued participation of the Pilgrim Sands Trail Riders in the maintenance of OHV trails and encourage participation from other groups in the Adopt-a-Trail Program.	**Park Operations**, Partner, Trails and Greenways Section
Recreation	Increase education and outreach to OHV community regarding authorized use of OHVs in the Forest. Follow up with enforcement, as warranted.	**Bureau of Ranger Services,** Partner
Recreation	Conduct an Accessibility Assessment of the Forest.	Contractor, **Universal Access Program**
Recreation	Develop an interpretive plan for Freetown-Fall River and assess the possibility for interpretive staff to develop materials, signage, and activities for the public at the Forest, including Profile Rock. Work closely with the Assonet Band of the Wampanoag Nation.	**Interpretive Services**, Partner
Recreation	Work with Bioreserve partners to update and implement the Visitor Experience Goals from the Bioreserve Management Plan (Bioreserve Partners 2003) and increase the information that is available to the public about this vast resource.	**Interpretive Services**, Park Operations, Partner, Trails and Greenways Section, **Partner**
Recreation	Work with the geocaching community to ensure that caches located in sensitive natural and cultural resources are relocated out of those areas and that any new geocaches are placed outside of sensitive areas.	**Park Operations**

a. The lead party responsible for implementation is identified in bold.

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