



MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF
CONSERVATION AND RECREATION

Manuel F. Correllus State Forest
*Trails Update and Forest Stewardship
Public Information Session*

March 4, 2021



Meeting Logistics

Feedback will be welcomed at the conclusion of the presentation

- Submit via Q&A *or*
- Raise your hand
 - The moderator will introduce you and unmute you when it's your turn to speak

*Please note that this meeting will be recorded.
The recording will be a public record.*





MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF
CONSERVATION AND RECREATION



Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Governor

Charles D. Baker

Lieutenant Governor

Karyn E. Polito

Energy and Environmental Secretary

Kathleen A. Theoharides

Department of Conservation and Recreation Commissioner

Jim Montgomery



DCR Mission

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



Agenda

- State Forest Overview
- DCR Project Review & Approval Process
- MCSF Trail Network Assessment & Plan
- Ongoing Stewardship

Manuel F. Correllus State Forest Overview

- One of the top three most ecologically diverse properties in the state.
- One of DCR's most significant properties for rare species and rare species habitat conservation.
- Largest track of undeveloped land on Martha's Vineyard.
- Key part of the island's conservation network.
- Diverse recreation experiences/amenities.
- Rich Native American, colonial and military history.



Manuel F. Correllus State Forest- Overview

Ecological Resources

- 5,173 acres- mostly designated as a *Reserve (DCR Landscape Designation for its high-value ecosystem)*-
- 90.17% of the Forest is protected as habitat for rare and endangered species including:
 - ✓ 38 state listed species: plants, moths, butterflies, birds (MESA)
 - ✓ 1 federally listed species (ESA)
 - ✓ 6 Priority Natural communities: 5 are ranked as S1 communities (fragile ecosystems vulnerable of extirpation)





Manuel F. Correllus State Forest- Overview Recreational Resources

- Disc Golf Course
- Model Air Flying Field
- Heath Hen Sculpture/History
- 72 total miles of trails (as of 2016)- Hiking, biking, horseback riding & dog walking
 - ✓ 26 miles of natural surface trails
 - ✓ 32 miles of fire lanes
 - ✓ 14 miles of paved surface multiuse trail
- Hunting: Stocked pheasant; deer/rabbit





Manuel F. Correllus State Forest

DCR – Project Review & Approval Process

- DCR Regulations
- Landscape Designation
 - Management guidelines
- Resource Management Plans
 - Short term/long term management goals
- Avoid and/or Minimize Impacts to Ecological Resources-
Regulatory Requirements:
 - Rare species and rare species habitat (MESA/ DFW)
 - Wetlands and waterways (MassDEP/Conservation Commissions/ACOE)
 - Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA)
- Avoid and/or Minimize Impacts to Cultural/Archeological
Resources- Regulatory Requirements
 - Mass Historic Commission Review



Papillose Nut-sedge fruiting culm, with white achene covered with warty projections (left), and characteristic cespitose (clumped) growth form (right). Photos by Jennifer Garrett.



Manuel F. Correllus State Forest

Trails Best Management Guidelines-Trail Proposal & Evaluation Form

Every trail impacts wildlife and habitat

- Landscape Designation
 - Reserve: Lower densities of trails and recreational facilities help contribute to wildlife/habitat values.
- Ecological Resources
 - Rare species habitat: New trails and ongoing trail maintenance require NHESP review/approval (MESA).
 - Wetlands and waterways: Unavoidable impacts require Conservation Commission/MassDEP approval.
- Cultural/Archeological Resources
 - New trails or maintenance requiring earth disturbing activities must undergo a cultural resources review.
- Forest Management Resource Impacts
- Other:
 - Evidence for trail demand
 - Short term/long management issues
 - Potential conflicts

Department of Conservation and Recreation

Trails Guidelines and Best Practices Manual



The Manchester-Manitowick trail to Mt. Norwottuck

The health and happiness of people across Massachusetts depend on the accessibility and quality of our green infrastructure - our natural resources, recreational facilities, and great historic landscapes. The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) provides vital connections between people and the environment with over 4,000 miles of trails and 200 miles of paved bikeways and rail trails. Consistent and clearly defined trail policies, procedures, and program guidelines can provide inspiration and direction for managing, enhancing, and developing a successful and sustainable trail system for Massachusetts.

DCR Trails Guidelines and Best Practices Manual

Updated July 2019

Trail Density Guidelines for DCR Trail Networks

Trail Density	Metric
Low	0-3 km per km ²
Medium	3-6 km per km ²
High	6-9 km per km ²
Excessive	>9 km per km ²

DCR Guidelines recommend a trail density between low and medium in forest reserves.



Manuel F. Correllus State Forest- Trails Update

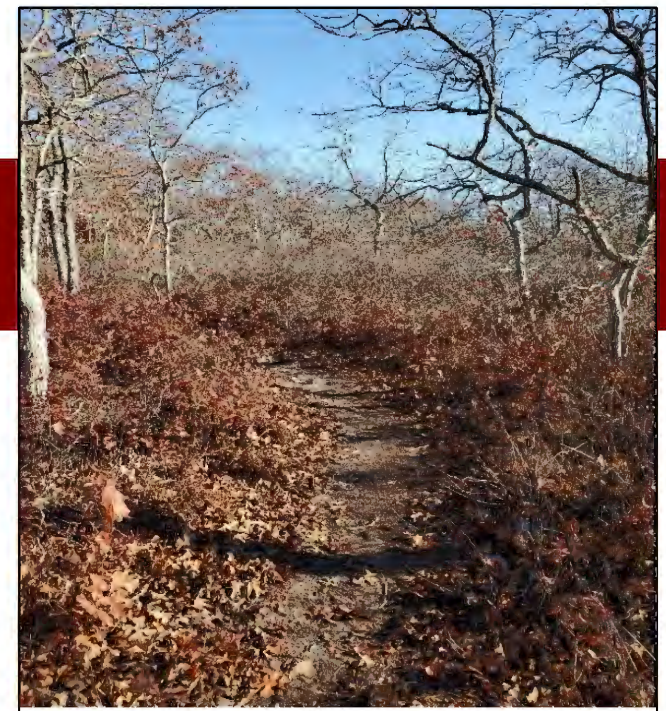
- Unauthorized trails
- Opportunity to reassess the authorized trails network
- Public assistance/support





Manuel F. Correllus State Forest- Unauthorized Trails Timeline

- Mid-April of 2020: DCR's Trails Program and Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) notified of unauthorized trail creation. Began review.
- May 2020: NHESP issues a non-compliance letter to Sherriff's Meadow Foundation.
- July 2020- Present: DCR, NHESP and Sherriff's Meadow discussing restitution and restoration plan.
- October-December 2020: DCR staff conducts site visits to review the unauthorized trails and DCR's official trails.
- January 2021: Trails assessment and new trail system plan.



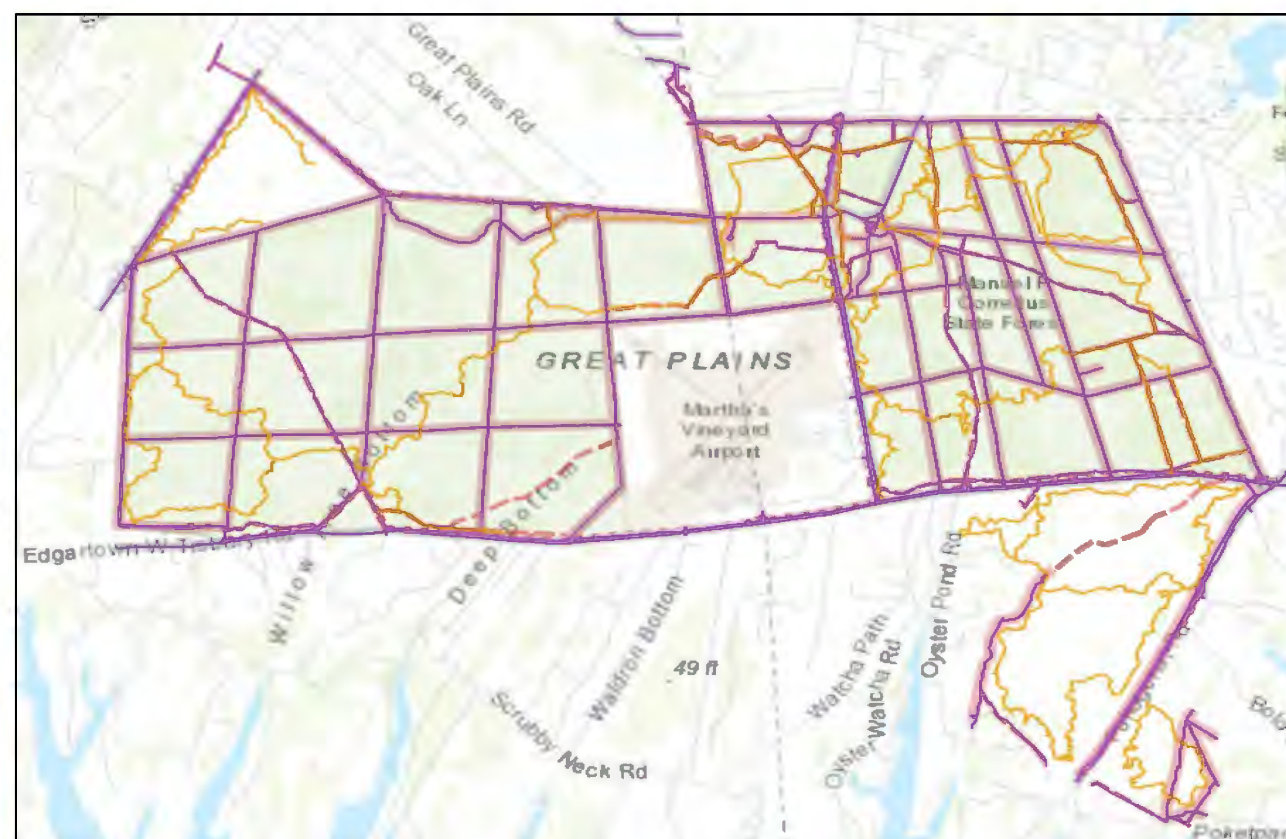
Unauthorized trail through scrub oak community.



Unauthorized trail through oak woodland forest.



DCR Official Trails Map (2016, MassGIS).



View of the DCR Official Trails map overlaid with the unauthorized trails (orange).



Manuel F. Correllus State Forest- Unauthorized Trails

Why are these unauthorized trails an issue?

- 25 miles of unauthorized trails- Resulted in approximately 32 acres of disturbance to rare species habitat.
- Resulted in other ecological impacts including habitat fragmentation and degradation of fragile ecosystems.
- Conflict with the trail density guidelines provided in DCR's Forest Reserve designation:

	MCSF 2016 Trail Density	MCSF 2019 Trail Density
Total Miles	72	97
Km per km ²	5.5	7.4
Density Range	Medium	High

- Were not approved by DCR's review & approval process and applicable regulatory agencies.

As a result,

- Unauthorized trails will be closed, restored and monitored.
- Opportunity to amend the authorized trails network.

Manuel F. Correllus State Forest- DCR Trail Network Assessment

Goals:

- Maintaining existing medium trail density
 - 72 miles of trails (3-6 km per km²)
- Enhancing connectivity across the Forest
- Protecting rare species and their habitat
- Protecting ecological resources

DCR Official Trails Map (2016, MassGIS).



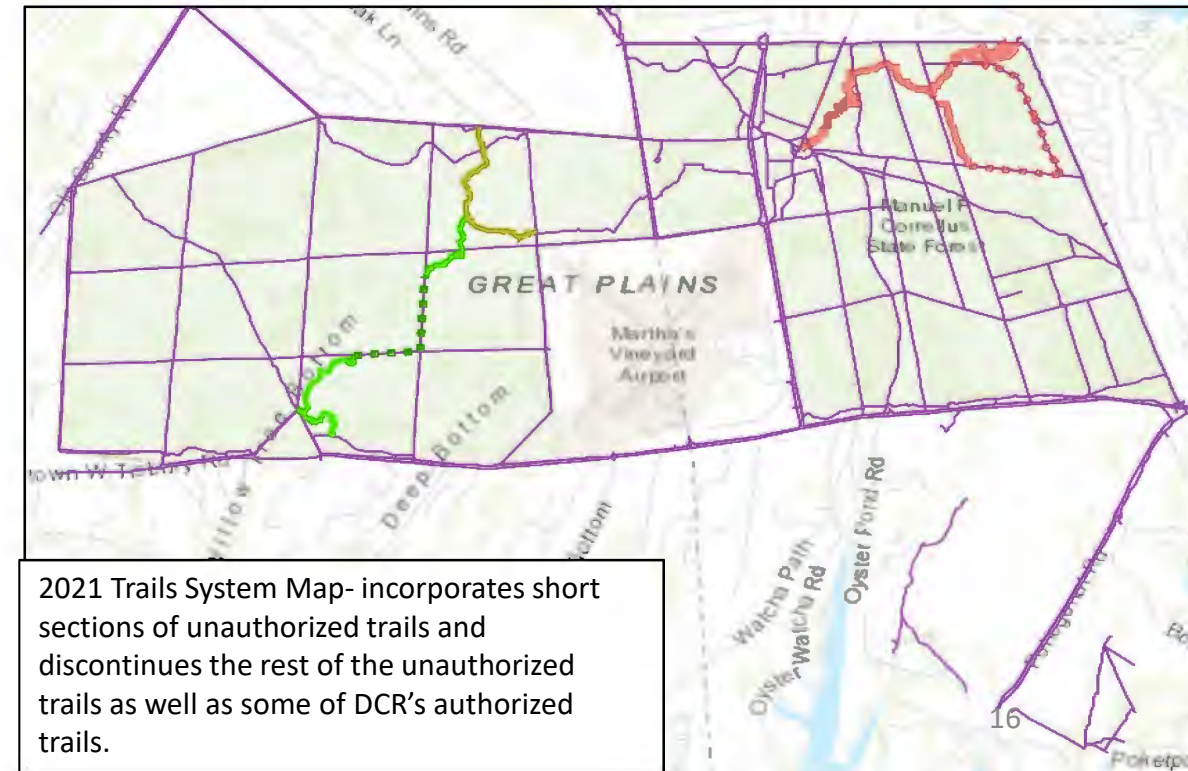


Manuel F. Correllus State Forest- DCR 2021 Trail System Plan

- New Trails: 4.34 miles
 - ✓ Enhanced connectivity across the Forest
- Closure/restoration of authorized trails: 3.13 miles
 - ✓ Restoration of sensitive rare species habitat
 - ✓ Protection of ecological resources
- Net gain: 1.21 miles of new trail (5.58 km per km²)
 - ✓ *73.21 total miles of trail*
 - ✓ Maintains existing medium range of trail density appropriate for a Reserve.



Poorly sited and unsustainable section of Red Path Trail



2021 Trails System Map- incorporates short sections of unauthorized trails and discontinues the rest of the unauthorized trails as well as some of DCR's authorized trails.



Manuel F. Correllus State Forest- Trails System Action Plan

2021 Trails Network:

- Close and restore unauthorized trails: (Spring 2021- ongoing)
 - MOU with Sherriff's Meadow for trail restoration and monitoring
 - Share interim DCR Trail Map
 - Install trail closure signs
- Obtain Authorization/Permits for 2021 Trails System
 - 60-90 days
- Issue final MCSF Trail Map

Additional habitat enhancement:

- Invasive species monitoring
 - NHESP/Sherriff's Meadow
- Invasive species management
 - DCR/Sherriff's Meadow MOU
- Other habitat improvement



UNAUTHORIZED TRAIL CLOSED



Help us restore this unique habitat by avoiding the use of this unauthorized trail.

DCR is in the process of amending the forest's trail network to balance recreational opportunities with its unique and fragile ecology.

At this time, please enjoy the forest's official trails as highlighted in the interim trails map. Please scan the following QR Code to access the interim trails map:



Thank you for understanding and being our partner in protecting
Manuel Correllus State Forest and its unique ecology for
today, tomorrow and the future.

Ongoing Stewardship

- Conor Laffey, Forest Supervisor
 - Conor.Laffey@mass.gov
- Establish partnerships and MOUs with stakeholder groups
- Enhance public education/outreach
 - Interpretative Signs
 - Interpretative Programs (Partnerships)



FROST POCKETS: A LANDSCAPE OF EXTREMES

Frost pockets are depressions that accumulate cooler air, allowing frost to occur in any season—even summer. In contrast, on a hot day, the temperatures in frost pockets can exceed the maximum temperatures of the surrounding areas as there is little to no shade from canopy trees. These conditions

support distinctive shrub, heathland, and grassland plant communities as well as a variety of interesting lichens.

Frost pockets are very sensitive to human disturbance and are easily damaged by motorized vehicles, hikers, and cyclists. These plant communities take decades to recover. Please view these unique environments only from established trails to avoid causing harm.

We need your help!

- What kind of interpretative efforts would you like to see in the Forest?
- Promote the interim trails plan and disseminate the final trails plan once its released.
- Respect the trail closures so that we can successfully restore the habitat.
- Become a Forest volunteer/steward.
- Questions?





Additional Information

The recording of this meeting will be posted at:

www.mass.gov/dcr/past-public-meetings

If you have suggestions for ongoing stewardship efforts, including interpretative signs and programs, or if you wish to subscribe to a DCR general information or project-related listserv, contact:

DCR's Office of Community Relations at Mass.Parks@mass.gov