



WILDLIFE LANDS ACQUISITION IN FY19

Land acquisition staff from both Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and MassWildlife collaborated on 41 projects in FY 19 (July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019) protecting a total of 2,436.61 acres of critical habitat, forests, grasslands, water frontage and inland water access points. These parcels will be added to MassWildlife’s current holdings of 173,948 acres of Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) and other holdings, and 47,244 acres of Wildlife Conservation Easements and Restrictions. The land acquisition team focuses on the most important land for hunting and fishing access, and biodiversity. Traits such as wildlife corridors, flood water absorption, and climate change resiliency are also important considerations. Our land protection efforts will pay many dividends to all the citizens of Massachusetts now and in the future.

The Southeast District completed a pivotal acquisition project of 99 acres on the Nemas-

ket River in Middleborough. For decades, many groups have been trying to protect the Jigerjian property for open space. The District considers this property to be the single most important property to be protected along the Nemasket River. It has 1 1/2 miles of scenic river frontage, rare species habitat, one of the largest herring runs in southern New England, and excellent public access. Much of the property can be hunted and offers other opportunities for fish and wildlife-related recreation both on water and land.

The Northeast District protected 267 acres in nine towns. In Ipswich, a 29-acre parcel was acquired with funding from the Army Corps of Engineers’ In-Lieu-of-Fee program. The majority of this parcel is salt marsh, but also includes an oak-covered island that provides excellent wildlife habitat and beautiful views. Another highlight was a 37-acre parcel in Pepperell bordering Groton. This parcel will be part of

the nearby Squannacook River WMA, but more importantly it adjoins over 650 acres of protected lands of several different organizations.

Central District land acquisition staff conserved 475 acres of land. Acquisition of the former Walter E. Fernald Corporation land in Templeton enhances landscape-level biodiversity and wildlife habitat protection across 2,200+ acres of conserved lands spanning the Otter River State Forest in the north to the Templeton State Forest in the south. This 465-acre property will be a new Wildlife Management Area: Norcross Hill WMA. The WMA, abutting the Templeton Development Center, includes over 5,300 feet of frontage on the Norcross Hill and Beaver Brooks, preserves and expands opportunities for active forest management, agricultural uses, and permanently secures public access for wildlife recreation including hunting, fishing and exploring nature. MassWildlife’s ability to acquire the Norcross Hill WMA would not have been possible if it were not for a partnership with the North County Land Trust and Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust. Together, with the Town of Templeton, the partners applied for and received a grant through the Massachusetts Landscape Partnership Program which provided critical financial support.

In the Connecticut River Valley District 863 acres were protected. One important acquisition was a 61-acre Conservation Restriction on North Pond, with 1,500 feet of frontage on the pond and adjacent to the Southwick Wildlife Management Area. A high risk area for residential development; this project on North Pond conserves the remaining undeveloped waterfront on the three contiguous ponds, Congamond Lakes in Southwick. The project was a cooperative effort with the Franklin Land Trust and the Town of Southwick.

Western District land protection projects expanded acreage in eight WMAs and conserved over 1,078 acres of land. Approximately 624 acres was added to Fox Den Wildlife Management Area (WMA) in the Towns of Worthington, Middlefield and Chester. The Fox Den WMA is one of the premier upland game hunting areas in the state. This acquisition protected an additional 950 feet of frontage along the Middle Branch of the Westfield River, a top trout fishery, included two major tributaries to the Middle Branch and a large forest core habitat area. Other Western District acquisitions protected approximately 9,000 feet of frontage along the Williams River, another outstanding coldwater fishery in West Stockbridge and added acreage to both the Williams River WMA and the Maple Hill WMA.

To see a map of all of our protected properties visit mass.gov/dfw/wildlife-lands and see page 31.

	WESTERN	VALLEY	CENTRAL	NORTHEAST	SOUTHEAST	TOTAL
WMA	49,030.62	20,724.14	40,429.82	15,065.51	44,545.72	169,795.81
WCE	15,476.35	8,465.51	8,725.50	2,160.36	11,434.14	46,261.86
Access	35.82	526.01	692.55	234.94	59.41	1,548.73
Sanctuary	427.50		367.91	552.48	78.50	1,426.39
WCR	69.40	2.39	746.41	127.00	37.90	983.10
Installation	2.35	579.22		106.42	114.36	802.35
Other				371.70	5.94	377.64
TOTAL	65,042.04	30,297.27	50,962.19	18,618.41	56,275.97	221,195.88

- WMA (Wildlife Management Area)** – Land owned outright by DFG/MassWildlife. Open to the public for hunting, fishing, trapping and other passive recreation. Subject to Wildlife Management Area Regulations
- WCE (Wildlife Conservation Easement)** – DFG/MassWildlife owns development and recreation rights. Open to the public for hunting, fishing, trapping and other passive recreation.
- Access Areas** – Property providing public recreation access to water bodies or adjacent conservation lands owned by a third party. (Does not include Office of Fishing and Boating Access boat launches, ramps or fishing piers)
- Wildlife Sanctuary** – Wildlife properties donated to MassWildlife and governed by statute and regulation, fishing, hunting, and trapping are prohibited; other public recreation access is permitted.
- WCR (Wildlife Conservation Restriction)** – DFG or MassWildlife owns development rights, but public access is not allowed. These lands buffer wildlife habitat by preventing unwanted development.