dcr
Massachusetts

Mount Everett State Reservation Summit

Resource Management Plan

March, 2006

Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation
Division of Planning and Engineering
Resource Management Planning Program

Mount Everett State Reservation Summit Resource Management Plan

Adopted by the Stewardship Council
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Project Overview

The mission of the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) mission is to exercise care and oversight for the natural, cultural, and historic resources of the Commonwealth and to provide quality public outdoor recreational opportunities that are environmentally sustainable, affordable, and accessible to all citizens. To carry out its mission, DCR investigates, analyses, plans and provides stewardship of the Commonwealth's resources.

DCR undertook the preparation of the Mount Everett Reservation Summit Resource Management Plan (RMP) in recognition of the globally unique natural resources on the summit so that the Department could plan wisely to insure their longevity. The plan is also being prepared to fulfill the provision of the EOEA MEPA Certificate on the removal of the fire tower issued in 2003 directing the Department to prepare a resource management plan for the summit of Mount Everett.

The Mount Everett Summit RMP will guide all activities occurring on the summit of Mount Everett within the 1,675-acre Mount Everett State Reservation in the Town of Mount Washington. The overall goal of the plan is to protect the unique natural resources of the Mount Everett summit environment and to provide public access and recreation compatible with this stewardship responsibility.

A significant amount of research has been conducted by pre-eminent scientists on the natural resources of Mount Everett. The RMP summarizes these field studies to frame the primary management goal and objectives to protect the natural resources on the summit. Key natural resource features include dwarf pitch pine forest, habitat for rare moths, and other unusual vegetation characteristic of the summit's ecology.

The plan develops a clear overall management goal for the summit, articulates management objectives, and provides environmental indicators to be used to judge if the vision has been achieved. The 105-acre planning area consists of a 35-acre summit area located above the 2500-foot contour elevation and a 70-acre summit area buffer zone located between the 2400-foot and the 2500-foot contour elevations. Figure 1 and Figure 2 located on pages 11 and 13 show the general extent of The Mount Everett State Reservation and The Mount Everett Summit planning area.

Based on the input of scientists, local officials, interested citizens, public agencies and private organizations, the stewardship recommendations are presented consistent with the land management framework used in other DCR parks and forests within designated Areas of Critical

Environmental Concern. The recommended action steps include summit natural resources monitoring and protection, public safety, interpretive opportunities, public access and impact avoidance steps.

DCR Management Context

Although the subject of this resource management plan is the 105-acre summit area of Mount Everett, it is important to describe the larger management context of the summit area and the Mount Everett Reservation. As stated above, the summit area is a smaller portion of the larger 1,675-acre Mount Everett Reservation. The reservation is part of a larger DCR management unit that includes approximately 750 acres along the Appalachian Trail (AT) from the Connecticut State line to the Jug End Reservation (including approximately 315 acres of the AT Corridor federally owned), 410 acres of the Bash Bish Falls State Park, 4,585 acres of the Mount Washington State Forest, and 1,190 acres of the Jug End Reservation/Wildlife Management Area (jointly owned and managed by the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife). The overall acreage of this management unit, administered by DCR's Western Region of the Division of State Parks and Recreation, is approximately 8,600 acres.

Within this 8,600-acre management unit, DCR is responsible for approximately 45 miles of trails, 8 trailheads, 5 miles of roads, 5 camping areas, 16 acres of mowed fields, one state forest headquarters building, 6 houses, 2 barns, 3 garages, 3 shelters, one storage shed, one cattle shed, one woodshed, one potato cellar, one cabin, one composting toilet, and 12 pit toilets. Annual attendance estimates for the Mount Everett Reservation for 2002-2005 (Memorial Day-Columbus Day) average approximately 10,000. The annual attendance estimate for Mount Washington State Forest (including Bash Bish Falls) for 2005 is approximately 35,000.

Regarding DCR staff resources assigned to this management unit, the full time, year round supervisor based at Mount Washington State Forest retired in 2002. For 2003-2005 only one seasonal supervisor was assigned to cover this management unit. This timeframe roughly coincides with the time period that the access road from East Street to the Mount Everett Reservation has been closed due to poor road conditions. DCR currently plans to hire a full time, year round supervisor for this management unit by April or May of 2006, in addition to two seasonal (summer) staff positions. In addition, a DCR regional trail coordinator, responsible for trail management coordination for the entire Western Region, works with the Appalachian Mountain Club, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, the Student Conservation Association, and other organizations to help provide management and maintenance for all recreational trails in the Western Region, including the segment of the Appalachian Trail that traverses the Mount Everett Summit area. A DCR management forester is responsible for forest management activities on all DCR properties in the southern Berkshire district of the Western Region, including the summit area of the Mount Everett Reservation.

Summary of the Planning Process

In response to the 2003 EOEA Certificate directing the Department to prepare a management plan for the Mount Everett summit area, DCR project manager Richard Thibedeau and a DCR planning team prepared a scope of services and hired the consultant firm Epsilon Associates, Inc. to prepare the draft management plan. The process of developing the draft plan included the preparation of summaries of several recent scientific studies that had been conducted and published regarding the Mount Everett summit area, and further consultation with scientists and environmental organizations that have been previously interested and/or involved in the study and stewardship of the summit area.

A public meeting to describe the planning project, provide a summary of preliminary findings, and solicit public feedback and comment was held in cooperation with the Mount Washington Board of Selectmen on March 14, 2005. Meeting topics included the ecological significance and sensitivity of the summit, continued scientific research and monitoring, and recreational use and access. The principal findings and recommendations presented at this meeting were generally the same as those included in the public review draft RMP circulated for public review and comment in October and November, 2005.

In cooperation with the Mount Washington Board of Selectmen, a second public meeting was held on November 7, 2005 regarding the Public Review Draft RMP dated October 3, 2005. A notice regarding the public review, November 7 public meeting, and availability of the draft plan for public review and comment was published in the October 24, 2005 issue of the Environmental Monitor, published by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs. Notice of the public review and the public meeting were posted on the DCR Resource Management Planning Program web site, and the Draft RMP also was posted on the web site. The public comment period extended to November 30, 2005.

Approximately 30-35 people attended the November 7 public meeting, and approximately 70 written comments were submitted regarding the Draft RMP. Strong support was expressed for the RMP. A summary and list of the written comments are provided in Appendix 9.0 - B, as well as a response to these comments and a summary of revisions incorporated into the final RMP.

II. MANAGEMENT GOAL

Based on the documented ecological importance of the unique resources of the summit and input from a wide spectrum of public and private interested parties, the DCR Planning Team recommends that the Management Goal for Mount Everett Summit be:

> ***Afford Mount Everett Summit the highest protection so that it can continue to serve as a premier natural laboratory for the study, understanding and appreciation of the dwarf pitch pine community and associated flora and fauna and to afford the walking public superb views of the southern Berkshire mountains and valleys.***

III. PRIORITY FINDINGS

1. Numerous research studies have documented the summit's environmental attributes. The combined results of these reports revealed that Mount Everett is inhabited by vegetation, lichen, moth, and wildlife species that are unique and uncommon, including rare species protected under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA) Regulations (321 CMR 10.00). Dwarf pitch pine, a highly unusual vegetation community in the Northeast, is well dispersed on the summit and exhibits gnarled and stunted growth characteristics. Rare moth and lichen species have been inventoried and documented on the summit, some classified as new to the Northeast and North America.

2. Although much of the summit vegetation exhibit distorted growth forms, the dwarf pitch pines highlight a regional rarity with their summit dispersion and growth characteristics. Only a few other dwarf pitch pine communities occur on rocky ridge tops in the Northeast. Unlike their low elevation, sand plain counterparts, little formal study has been completed on ridge top dwarf pitch pine. Although similarities exist with other ridge top communities, Mount Everett is extremely unique based on its various growth characteristics, lack of environmental and human disturbances, and historical significance. Pitch pine is generally non-serotinous throughout most of its range and only in a few locations is there a high degree of serotiny. These few locations (with high degrees of serotiny) are thought to experience frequent fire, and include some ridge top sites. In contrast, on Mount Everett and nearby summits, pitch pine is non-serotinous and has apparently persisted without frequent fire. The absence of any evidence of significant summit fire in over a century may demonstrate that this dwarf pitch pine community is dependent on the harsh soil conditions and weather events to which the ridge top is exposed.

3. A lichen based inventory yielded 50 different genera and 112 identified species. Many of the lichens observed typify populations found on summits with similar elevation, physical characteristics, and vegetation communities. The most important and significant findings revealed that several species unique to the State, the Northeast, and North America were observed on the summit. Due to the scattered distribution of these lichen populations, management recommendations focus on the whole community rather than individual and isolated lichens populations to be protected. The two primary threats to the summit lichen are fires and human induced abrasions from hikers.

4. A lepidopteron study of the summit revealed the presence of several moth species listed under MESA, while others were deemed uncommon and rare to the region. Some species have been de-listed since the original survey. Nonetheless, their contributions to the summit's uniqueness remain important and significant. The vegetation and physical characteristics of the summit provide a habitat for foraging and mating of the moth species.

5. Recent studies show that the overall invasive species presence currently on Mount Everett is limited and does not pose a significant threat.

6. Mount Everett is the sixth tallest mountain in Massachusetts. The summit's relative ease of access affords the public long-distance scenic views of the surrounding countryside, viewing of the unique plant community, and the enjoyment of its natural environmental setting. The Appalachian Trail traverses the summit on its way from Georgia to Maine.

7. The boundary of Schenob Brook Drainage Basin Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) follows the approximate location of the Appalachian Trail, essentially bisecting the summit area. However, for practical purposes, the entire summit area should be considered a critical area and managed as such.

IV. SUMMIT ZONING

DCR applies Land Stewardship Zoning Guidelines to its parks, reservations and forests across the Commonwealth. This system provides a framework for the development of management guidelines to protect and manage the particular resources located in the planning area as well as to provide for appropriate recreational use and activities.

Based on the Findings above, this Plan provides that the Mount Everett Summit area and Buffer Zone be classified as Zone 1 in order to offer the highest level of protection to the unique natural resources on the summit. Section 3 and Appendix 9.0-A provide more information about Land Stewardship Zoning Guidelines.

V. PRIORITY ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Regular trail and summit visitations should be scheduled to monitor the physical conditions of the Appalachian Trail, introduction of invasive species, the hardwood competition with the pitch pine, and the regeneration of the pitch pine. A vegetation monitoring and management protocol should be developed. DCR and summit scientists should review the annual monitoring to determine if and what steps should be taken to preserve the viability of the summit dwarf pitch pine community.

2. Pedestrian trail use should be limited and restricted to the Appalachian Trail as it traverses the summit, reaches to adjacent scenic outcroppings, extends down the north slope along the emergency access road to the former upper parking area and stone shelter. The Appalachian Trail and any spur trails to scenic outlooks should be clearly marked.

3. The construction and installation of interpretive signs will highlight to hikers and the general public the areas of important natural communities and provide an abridged version of the significant State land regulations.

4. Scientific study and research should continue to fill the data gaps and monitor the habitat dynamics of the summit natural resources, specifically the dwarf pitch pine, lichen, avifauna and invertebrate species.

5. Coordination and consultation among DCR, Appalachian Trail Conference staff, town and regional public safety officials and other local organizations, such as the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC), Green Berkshires, Inc. and Friends of Mount Everett, as appropriate, should be undertaken to update the procedural response plan for emergency situations and fire suppression protocols.

6. Through existing fire suppression protocols, all wildfires will be contained and controlled.

7. The 2005 repairs of the gravel access road from East Street in the Town of Mount Washington potentially can once again provide vehicle access to the mid-parking area, north of Guilder Pond near the Appalachian Trail, depending on additional road repairs and maintenance to the access road needed to be undertaken in the spring of 2006 and adequate staff resources (see Management Needs and Alternatives below). The emergency access road from the mid parking area to the former upper parking area (currently seriously compromised by erosion and non functioning culverts) should remain closed to vehicle traffic, except for emergency vehicles. Repairs to the emergency access road should be undertaken as soon as the necessary funds are allocated.

8. Repairs to the roof of the stone shelter at the former upper parking should be undertaken in the summer of 2006, and vegetation should be cleared to maintain scenic views afforded from this location. Maintenance trimming of vegetation and ongoing monitoring of vegetation to provide scenic views should be undertaken at specific scenic viewing locations on the summit determined by DCR.

9. An invasive species monitoring program should be developed to allow early detection of invasive species and to facilitate rapid response to limit the occurrences and their ability to spread.

VI. MANAGEMENT NEEDS AND ALTERNATIVES

Current Management Capacity

As stated above, the Mount Everett Reservation Summit is part of a larger 8,300-acre management unit that consists of the Mount Everett Reservation, Bash Bish Falls, Mount Washington State Forest, and Jug End Reservation. The solutions to manage and protect the Summit and the trails leading to it cannot be separated from management solutions to meet the needs of the entire Mount Everett Reservation and its larger management unit. A full time, year round property supervisor has not been assigned to this management unit since 2002. A full time supervisor is scheduled to be hired in April/May 2006, in addition to two seasonal staff helpers.

A DCR regional trail coordinator, responsible for trail management coordination for the entire Western Region, works with the Appalachian Mountain Club, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, the Student Conservation Association, and other organizations to help provide management and maintenance for all recreational trails in the Western Region, including the segment of the Appalachian Trail that traverses the Mount Everett Summit area. A DCR management forester is responsible for forest management activities on all DCR properties in the southern Berkshire district of the Western Region, including the summit area of the Mount Everett Reservation.

RMP Management Needs and Recommendations

The access road to the Mount Everett Reservation from East Street has been closed from 2002 to the present. The gate inside the entrance to the Reservation is locked, but a small parking area provides limited parking for people to hike up the access road to the Guilder Pond area or farther up to the summit. The access road to Guilder Pond was repaired in 2005 at an approximate cost of $60,000. However, due to the lack of adequate staff to maintain culverts and related stormwater controls, portions of the access road were damaged in the fall of 2005 and require further repairs. Because of the same lack of staff resources to adequately monitor and maintain the road, drainage structures, and related stormwater controls, heavy storms in 2005 also washed out sections on the emergency access road from the Guilder Pond parking area to the former upper parking area, where the stone shelter is located. Repairs to the Guilder Pond access road are expected to be undertaken by DCR staff in the spring of 2006. At the earliest, repairs to the emergency access road cannot be undertaken until FY07 (beginning in July, 2006). Repairs to this section of roadway must be funded through capital funds not yet allocated.

Ongoing monitoring and maintenance of the conditions of the access road, stormwater drainage, and the Guilder Pond parking area will be required in the spring of 2006 as the additional repairs are completed. This work is required in order to avoid adverse ecological impacts to the Reservation from stormwater runoff, to preserve previous investments undertaken to construct, repair and maintain the road, and to protect public safety by providing for emergency access to the Reservation and the summit area.

Once the access road is opened to the public (with opening of the lower gate inside the entrance), continued monitoring of increased use of the Guilder Pond parking and picnic area and increased trail use to and at the Summit area will be required. Staff time and resources will be required to provide road maintenance and monitor recreational access, visitor safety and trail use.

Additional priority management needs and opportunities at the Summit area described above include ongoing monitoring of the physical conditions at the Summit, development of a vegetation monitoring and management protocol, limiting trail use to the Appalachian Trail and designated spur trails to scenic outlooks, maintenance trimming of vegetation to provide selected scenic views, the installation of interpretative signage, repairs to the existing stone shelter, and continued scientific study and research and coordination and consultation with several partner groups and organizations.

These basic management needs and recommendations, as state above, also include the repair of the emergency access road to the former upper parking area as soon as the project funding is allocated.

Management Alternatives

While it is difficult to separate the management responsibilities of DCR staff in meeting the needs of the Mount Everett Summit area from those required for the rest of the larger 8,600-acre management unit, the current staffing arrangement of only one seasonal supervisor and two seasonal workers assigned to the entire management unit is unlikely to be sufficient to meet the needs and recommendations outlined above. This plan identifies two management alternatives, plus two additional management measures or options that can be incorporated as part of a comprehensive management solution.

1. The first management alternative consists of hiring a full time, year round supervisor for this management unit by April or May of 2006, in addition to two seasonal (summer) staff positions. Plans to hire these staff are underway. This staffing level will address basic management needs and implement some of the priority recommendations described above. However, if staff monitoring identifies problems with vandalism, unauthorized uses or other problems, this management alternative would require that the gate at the East Street entrance be closed and public access limited to hikers who walk up to Guilder Pond and the Summit, or that DCR develop some other means to address these management problems. This management alternative also provides for ongoing coordination with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, the Appalachian Mountain Club, The Nature Conservancy and other partner groups and organizations to monitor and maintain the Appalachian Trail, monitor the pitch pine community and associated habitats on the summit, and implement other priority action recommendations.

2. The second management alternative consists of hiring and assigning additional permanent or seasonal staff to this management unit. Additional personnel would be required to address increased management and maintenance activities, including potential adverse impacts resulting from the opening of the access road and increased public access and use of the Reservation and Summit area. Additional staff would also help implement priority plan recommendations, and provide management and control of increased use of the Reservation and the Summit area during the autumn season, special permit vehicle access to the former upper parking area for interpretive and educational programs, and improved data collection on recreational use activities and patterns. This management alternative also depends on and is related to the parallel management needs of other sections of the larger management unit.

Two additional management measures are already incorporated into the current management of the Mount Everett Summit area, but are acknowledged here as options that can be considered part of a comprehensive management strategy for this facility. These measures alone cannot address the basic management needs described above for this property, but can supplement and

enhance the two management alternatives described above. The use of these measures or options may expand or contract, depending on specific needs and other resources available.

The first management measure consists of utilizing regional staff assigned to other DCR properties, facilities, and programs within the Western Regional District. For example, the supervision of the repairs to the access road and the parking lot may be allocated to a regional engineer, and the repairs or maintenance to a DCR supervisor or road crew with regional responsibilities. DCR already uses this arrangement at the Reservation for road repairs and maintenance, and for the oversight of the Appalachian Trail by a regional trail coordinator. In addition, the responsibilities of a regional ranger include periodic patrols of this management unit, with support from a seasonal ranger or state environmental police.

The second measure or option consists of expanding existing partnerships with private interest groups and organizations or entering into new partnerships. These models can be utilized for discrete tasks, such as monitoring and maintaining trails, assessing the ecological health of areas of unique environmental value, or undertaking additional research and scientific studies.

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Figure 1 USGS Topographical Map of Planning Area

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Figure 2 Aerial Photograph of Planning Area

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Mount Everett is located in the southwestern corner of Massachusetts in the Town of Mount Washington. As part of the Mount Everett State Reservation, the mountain is managed by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), formerly known as Department of Environmental Management (DEM). At an elevation of 2,602 feet, Mount Everett is the tallest mountain within the Southern Taconic Range and the sixth highest summit in Massachusetts.

Generations of naturalists and outdoor enthusiasts have enjoyed the panoramic views from the summit and the unique natural setting. Passive recreation is centered on the Appalachian Trail which traverses the summit. Day visitors also readily access the mountain from the gravel road off of East Street in the Town of Mount Washington, which enables hikers to walk from the lower parking lot to the summit.

Mount Everett and the surrounding landscape have been recognized as important natural assets. A portion of the summit is located in the towns of Sheffield and Mount Washington within the 13,750-acre Schenob Brook Drainage Basin Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). The Secretary of Environmental Affairs designated the ACEC in 1990 in recognition of the unique and exceptional environmental values of the summit and the Schenob Brook drainage area. DEM's Scenic Landscape Inventory classified Mount Everett as "Distinctive," which is the highest classification (DEM. 1982). The Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) has designated Mount Everett and nearby summits as "Core Habitat," signifying that the area is "viable habitat for rare plants, rare animals, and exemplary natural communities" (BioMap, 2001).

In June of 2000, DCR proposed to repair the fire tower located on the Mount Everett Summit and filed its plans with the Secretary of Environmental Affairs in an Environmental Notification Form (ENF) under the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA). This filing initiated the interests of local and regional naturalists to expand the study of the summit and further assess its ecological importance. Studies conducted by researchers and naturalists documented species and natural communities that were unique and uncommon, including rare species protected under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act Regulations (321 CMR 10.00).

Following extensive public comments on the proposed project, DCR determined that the fire tower repairs were inconsistent with the long-term stewardship of Mount Everett for the protection of the unique natural environment of the summit and the management of appropriate public access. DCR subsequently filed a Notice of Project Change (NPC) under MEPA stating that it would remove the fire tower, repair and improve the lower

portion of the access road, and develop a management strategy for the summit area. With the use of a helicopter, the fire tower was airlifted off the summit during the spring of 2003.

1.2 History

The Town of Mount Washington was first settled in 1692 by Dutch from the Hudson River Valley; the first European settlement in Berkshire County. Mount Washington was incorporated as a town by the Massachusetts General Court in 1779. Historic accounts reveal that Native Americans used the Mount Everett region as hunting grounds. Recovered Indian artifacts and old maps indicate former Native American trails within the Mount Everett State Reservation (Tillinghast, 1999). Historically referred to as the Taconic Dome, the summit of Mount Everett and its expansive views have been described in literature as far back as the late 18th Century. The earliest recorded account of unobstructed views came from Timothy Dwight in 1781. The first documented record of the low lying vegetation characteristics, seemingly dwarf pitch pine, came from Hayden in 1829 (Tillinghast, 1999). Dwarf pitch pines were first specifically identified as the unique summit vegetation by Hitchcock in 1841 when he referenced two- to three-foot high yellow pines, which was an alternative name for pitch pine used during that time (Tillinghast, 1999). A photograph dated in the 1890's shows a man on Mount Everett with low stature vegetation and few hardwood species present (Motzkin et al., 2002).

No significant fire-induced landscape disturbances have been documented on the summit in more than a century. Annual reports from the Mount Everett State Reservation Commissioners (MESRC) meetings, compiled through the 1950's yielded no accounts of major clearing or man-made disturbances (Tillinghast, 1999). Researchers have discovered macroscopic charcoal traces on the summit. This charcoal may have resulted from fires in the pre-European period or from the historical period, but the timing or source of ignition (human versus lightning) of the fire(s) is unknown. The use of fire or cutting vegetation may have been used to enhance berry production of improve views, but no documentation of such activities has been found (Motzkin et al., 2002). Historic reviews indicate that beyond the construction of the former fire towers and the Appalachian Trail network, no extensive vegetation removal activities have been recorded on the summit.

1.3 Physical Features

Situated within the 1,675 acres of the Mount Everett State Reservation, Mount Everett is located within 4 miles of both New York and Connecticut state lines in the southwestern corner of Massachusetts. Between its summit and Mount Undine to the north lies Guilder Pond, one of the highest freshwater ponds in the State. The summit soils consist of stony glacial till, comprised primarily of phyllite, slate, and shale (Motzkin et al., 2002). Bedrock outcroppings are regularly scattered on top of Mount Everett; soil layers are

shallow and sparse. Unique vegetation, primarily dwarf pitch pine, inhabits much of summit landscape. The dwarf character of the pitch pine is the result of its exposure to persistent wind and extreme winter weather as well as the thin soil layer and lack of nutrients.

Public access to the Mount Everett Reservation is provided by a gravel access road entering the Reservation from East Street, affording access for day hikers to Guilder Pond, the Appalachian Trail, and the DCR managed trails in the Reservation. There are three parking areas ancillary to the road which are referred to as the low, mid, and upper parking lots. Since 2002, a locked gate just above the lower parking lot has prevented vehicular passage to the mid and upper areas due to erosion of the roadway and damaged drainage culverts. The road is currently used by foot travelers to access Guilder Pond, the Appalachian Trail and the summit.

1.4 Summit Natural Community

Rare in the Northeast, a dwarf pitch pine (Pinus rigida) community inhabits approximately 20 acres of the summit (Motzkin et al., 2002). Intermixed with scrub oak and other hardwood species, the dwarf pitch pine vegetation community is shaped by the extreme summit weather conditions and limited soil accumulation. As the result of wind and ice storms and sparse soil accumulation, the pitch pines of Mount Everett have developed a dwarfed characteristic with stunted and gnarled trunks and tree canopies. Pitch pine communities also support a diverse natural community of plants and wildlife with several pitch pine affiliated species that are rare or uncommon to the region.

1.5 Recreational Activities

The summit of Mount Everett has long been admired for its views of the Catskills and Adirondacks to the west, the Berkshires to the north, the surrounding Taconic Ridge, and the mountains and valleys within the Housatonic River Valley. The Mount Everett access road provides day hikers with relatively easy and direct access to Guilder Pond and the Mount Everett Summit. Nearly 89 miles of the Appalachian Trail crosses Massachusetts meandering through the Berkshire landscape and traversing numerous mountain summits. Mount Everett rewards hikers and naturalists with picturesque vistas and wildlife viewing from the trail and adjacent exposed natural bedrock openings. No camping or fires are allowed on top of Mount Everett.

1.6 Fire Towers

Until recently, a fire tower has existed on the summit of Mount Everett. The first was built in 1918, a second tower in 1945 and a third tower in 1970. The first two towers stood at the intersection of the summit and the Appalachian Trail. The 1970 tower was built approximately 100 feet north of the original, and was accessed from the Appalachian Trail by a secondary trail. The last tower remained until 2003, but was

never actively used or staffed by DEM. Before the tower's removal, summit visitors were inherently drawn to it in hopes of a better view. Foot traffic between the Appalachian Trail and the fire tower caused vegetation trampling and the creation of meandering trails resulting in a direct impact to the dwarf pitch pine community. Due to concerns about vegetation impacts and public safety, the fire tower was dismantled and airlifted from the summit during the spring of 2003. Only the concrete pedestals from the two fire towers remain. Since its removal, hardwood vegetation and under story shrubs have grown over parts of these former secondary trails.

1.7 Planning Area

The Planning Area consists of the 35-acre Mount Everett Summit area defined primarily as land above the 2500-foot contour elevation and a summit buffer zone of approximately 69 acres defined as land located between the 2400-foot contour elevation and the 2500-foot contour elevation.

1.8 Planning Process

1. Establish Plan's purpose and perimeters
2. Form DCR planning team
3. Engage consultant
4. Review available summit field studies
5. Research management approaches for similar summit terrain
6. Develop preliminary findings and recommendations
7. Prepare draft plan
8. Undertake public review and input and complete final draft
9. Submit Final Draft Plan to DCR Stewardship Council for review and adoption
10. Upon Stewardship Council approval, post Final Plan on DCR website

2.0 SUMMIT DESCRIPTION AND USES

2.1 Vegetation

This section and the next section on wildlife summarize research recently completed on the summit of Mount Everett. The applicable study name, authors, and affiliations are provided at the beginning of the summary.

2.1.1 Dwarf Pitch Pine/ Oak Community

History and Dynamics of a Ridge Top Pitch Pine Community, Glenn Motzkin, David A. Orwig and David R. Foster, 2002, Harvard Forest, Harvard University

With its 20 acres of dwarf pitch pine, the vegetation cover of Mount Everett is atypical of mountain summits in the Northeast. So rare are these vegetation community types, The Nature Conservancy classifies them as globally unique (Motzkin et al., 2002), and the State's Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (DFW), Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (NHESP) ranks the ridge top pitch pine as S2, imperiled due its rarity (Swain and Kearsley, 2001). The pitch pine is interspersed with other vegetation including red oak (Quercus rubra), red maple (Acer rub rum) and other hardwoods. Although isolated patches of pitch pine are found on nearby Mount Race and Bear Mountain, the pitch pine community on Mount Everett is larger. Other ridge top pitch pine communities with similar growth characteristics and environmental conditions occur on the Shawangunk Ridge in New York and Panther Knob in West Virginia (Motzkin et al, 2002). Dwarf pitch pine stands in the Northeast are more common in low elevation areas such as the coastal sand plain regions of New Jersey and Long Island, as well as Plymouth County and Cape Cod Massachusetts.

While extensive research has been conducted on the pitch pine communities (also referred to as Pine Barrens) of the coastal plains, limited formal study has been completed on high elevation pitch pines. Coastal pitch pines located close to population centers have been impacted by land development and agriculture. In comparison, high elevation pitch pines are primarily isolated on protected lands where impacts are limited to passive recreational activities (Motzkin et al., 2002).

In 2000, forest ecologists from Harvard Forest initiated a study of the Mount Everett pitch pines. Tree cores conducted by Harvard Forest indicate that the average pitch pine is 78 years old with establishment dating back to the 1830s, while the age of red oak trees average 56 years with evidence of summit presence since the 1860s. The uneven-aged community consists of gnarled tree trunks and stunted growth forms. As suggested by the current stand characteristics and basal growth identified in tree cores, researchers surmise that during the mid to late 1900s red oak increased in relative abundance on the summit. Shaped by environmental conditions and weather exposure, growth characteristics have seemingly been molded by wind and ice as evident by stem damage

and epicormic branching. Interestingly, there are several growth formations for the summit pitch pine, ranging from low-lying pine mats to individual contorted trees of 3.0 meters. The Harvard Forest research indicates that pitch pine seedling densities were very low in comparison to the hardwoods. Further, the pitch pine mortality rates were the highest in all of the plots sampled. Historic accounts once referred to the pitch pine as the dominating vegetation type, now it comprises approximately 50% of the total tree density on the summit (Motzkin et al., 2002).

Researchers believe that the pitch pine community of Mount Everett exhibit adaptive strategies to enhance propagation. Pitch pine is generally non-serotinous throughout most of its range and only in a few locations is there a high degree of serotiny. These few locations (with high degrees of serotiny) are thought to experience frequent fire, and include some ridge top sites. In contrast, on Mount Everett and nearby summits, pitch pine is non-serotinous and has apparently persisted without frequent fire. While the study's field research did yield macroscopic charcoal traces, the timing (pre-European or historical period) or source (human versus lightening) of fire(s) is unknown. The use of fire or cutting vegetation may have been used to enhance berry production of improve views, but no documentation of such activities has been found (Motzkin et al., 2002). Remnants from illegal summit camp fires were noted, but no evidence of stem fire scars or trunk charring was found. The results of Harvard Forest's research reveal that potential undocumented summit disturbances occurred during the pre-European period which enabled the establishment of pitch pine (Motzkin et al., 2002). However, as evident with the canopy succession of red oak, the passage of time since these pre-European undocumented summit disturbances could explain the increased hardwood presence and greater pitch pine mortality.

Other hardwood species, specifically red maple and red oak, are intermixed with pitch pine and in specific locations, comprise the dominant canopy species. The summit hardwoods also exhibit similar stunted characteristics and gnarled canopies; however they are not as pronounced as in the pitch pine. Smaller trees and saplings include red maple, red oak, and grey birch. Low bush blueberry, huckleberry, chokeberry, and scrub oak represent the majority of the summit shrub layer (Tillinghast, 1999).

In terms of recommendations, the Harvard Forest study specifies continued evaluation and monitoring rather than specific management actions. The increasing summit oak presence is acknowledged; however, the authors state that the current rate of oak succession does not warrant immediate widespread management activity (Motzkin et al., 2002).

Botanical Inventory of the Summit Area of Mount Everett. Pamela Weatherbee and Nancy Childs. February 2001.

A botanical study focused on vascular plants was conducted within an approximately 20 acre area around the summit of Mount Everett. Searches were conducted on six days

from May through August 2000. Six plots were established and inventoried. Four plots were located in compass quadrants northeast, southeast, northwest and southwest, with two additional plots east and west of the Appalachian Trail on the mountain top's south slope.

The study documented the presence of a ridge top pitch pine community as defined by the MA Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program. This community includes pitch pine and scrub oak along with red oak and red maple. The shrub layer is occupied by ericaceous species. The ground layer is relatively barren with intermediate wood fern, interrupted fern, and Indian pipes occurring in areas dominated by deciduous trees. The three native willow species that occur in the state (out of many native willow species) were found in disturbed areas near the base of the fire tower.

No state-listed plant species were recorded during the survey. One watch-listed species, mountain birch (*Betula cordifolia*), may have been identified as it occurs in other high elevations including Mount Greylock. A positive confirmation of this species was not obtained during the study.

The study also described presence of non-native plant species as described in Section 2.1.3. below.

The Bryoflora of Mount Everett, Taconic Mountains, Massachusetts. Norton G. Miller. 2005.

Bryoflora is comprised of non-flowering plants such as mosses and liverworts. The researcher conducted a survey of bryoflora along a transect from Race Brook in the southeast lowlands across the Summit and down the north slope of the summit along the Appalachian Trail and the Mount Everett access road.

In general, bryophytes are more conspicuous on cool, moist north facing slopes than on drier south facing ones. The researcher recorded 109 mosses and 35 liverworts on Mount Everett. Previous surveys along the shores of Guilder Pond by Schuster (1969, 1974, 1980, 1992) identified an additional 10 species of liverworts. Summit pitch pine vegetation contained 27 species (22 mosses, 7 liverworts). In general, diversity of species increased from the Summit to lowlands. Several bryophyte species known to occur in lowland pitch pine forests (e.g., coastal pine barrens) were recorded in the pitch pine community on Mount Everett. However, these species are not exclusive to pitch pine forests and are likely to be found elsewhere in the lower forests of Mount Everett with additional searching. The most diverse bryoflora in the upper elevations occurred in the sub-summit forest near dry and wet ledges, and small springs and seeps primarily on the north and east side of the mountain. The study also identified species known to occur in other higher elevation areas. Four species not previously recorded on Mount Everett which are relatively uncommon in Massachusetts were identified.

2.1.2 Lichen/Fungi

Lichen Survey of Mount Everett Summit, Southwest Berkshire County, Massachusetts, Philip F. May, 2001

During late autumn in 1999 and the summer and autumn months of 2000, a lichen survey was conducted on the Mount Everett with the objective of identifying the presence, abundance, and growing characteristics of lichen on the summit. Researchers surveyed lichen on tree bark, rocks, and in soil (May, 2001). For each lichen species, researchers collected a specimen, which was further analyzed through laboratory techniques.

The survey resulted in 50 genera comprised of 112 separate species (May, 2001). Nearly half of the species observed were found on bark or woody debris, with the remainder recorded on, in decreasing order, rock, soil, and leaf litter. Larger trees tended to have the greatest abundance of lichen exposure, particularly on the lower trunk and branches.

Many of the observed lichens on Mount Everett mirror populations found on summits with similar physical characteristics and vegetation communities such as the Shawangunk Mountains of New York and sand plains of southern New England (May, 2001). Lichens found on exposed summit bedrock were consistent with those found on other Massachusetts summits of similar elevation. Soil based lichen observations were lower than anticipated by the researcher, perhaps due to the lack of soil accumulation and potential foot traffic impacts.

The results of the lichen research yielded several taxa unique to the State, the Northeast region, and to North America. Both rock dwelling and tree based lichens of global and regional significance were recorded. *Diploschistates badius*, a rare species, originally thought to be limited to Arizona and Costa Rica was found on schist outcrops in three separate locations (May, 2001). Although not widely observed, *Fuscidea pussilla* was noted and identified as Massachusetts' first known example. Another noteworthy species, *Lecanora ramulicola*, which was well dispersed along the ridge top, had not been previously reported in North America (May, 2001). While fairly common in the Northeast, *Lecidea tesselle* was recorded as new to Massachusetts and it encompasses much of the Mount Everett summit. Scattered populations of several other identified species such as *Lepraria borealis* and *Rindodina efflorescens* were classified as new to New England and Massachusetts, respectively.

The author of this research outlined several management recommendations and preferred actions to preserve the summit lichen populations. Due to the scattered summit distributions of the rock dwelling lichens, the author expressed that management should protect this type of lichen as a whole rather than as individual populations. It was noted that fire is the primary natural threat to the rock based lichen, while physical abrasions from hikers represent the main human induced impacts (May, 2001). The author's recommendations are summarized as follows:

The author recommended that additional marking or signage be included on the Appalachian Trail across the summit to discourage wandering from the trail.

The author acknowledged the presence of hardwood succession atop of the summit has led to informal discussions of vegetation management. Pitch pine forests are typically fire dependent relative; however historic accounts and ecological indicators, such as the lack of serotinous cones, suggest the summit vegetation has the ability to survive in the absence of fire. While the author recognizes that fire management may be beneficial for managing the pitch pine community, he does not recommend it on Mount Everett because it will result in mortality of both rock dwelling and tree-based lichens. In addition, the use of herbicides, pesticides, and fertilizers are also not recommended due to their known impacts to lichens (May, 2001).

Although potentially more labor intensive and expensive, the author suggests that if invading hardwoods or woody debris are sought to be reduced, cutting vegetation by hand rather than using prescribed burn activities is preferred. Although selectively cutting vegetation by hand can be labor intensive, the summit is a relatively small area, making it economically reasonable.

Mount Everett Mycoflora Project, Van Der Poll, R., PhD, January 2002

A macroscopic fungi review of the Mount Everett Summit was conducted by The Southern Taconics Research and Conservation Center. Macrofungi species occurrence is governed by the thin, spodosolic podzol-type soils (Van de Poll, 2002). Soil duff and leaf litter accumulation in the absence of fire also contributes to suitable macrofungi growth.

The survey was conducted along five ridge top transects, centralized around the USGS geodetic bench mark located at Mount Everett's summit. A total of 97 $4m^2$ circular plots were established along these transect lines with each station visited at least twice during the growing season. In addition to visual mycoflora observations, site conditions and surrounding vegetation community were described to provide habitat context. Samples were also collected for laboratory analysis to confirm identification.

The 97 plots yielded 169 macro fungi taxa (species), with 104 samples collected for further laboratory analysis of which 91 were identified to genus or species. Although no fungi new to science were found, several interesting and noteworthy occurrences were recorded. "A small, ciliate cup fungus with a golden-orange margin" was found only on pitch pine and therefore is very likely a species obligate (Van de Poll, 2002); however this cannot be confirmed without additional research. An unknown specimen, potentially new to the region, was found growing on snowshoe hare scat. The researcher noted that Mount Everett does have rich macrofungi diversity; however the lack of comprehensive mycoflora studies in North America could hinder the determination of the ecologically significant and important specimens (Van de Poll, 2002).

The researcher recommends that DCR authorize future study of the mycoflora on Mount Everett particularly directed toward endomycorrhizal fungi which may have some association with pitch pine communities. As for management recommendations, he indicated that fire would not have a negative impact on mycofloral diversity, and actually may increase species diversity in the short-term by encouraging growth of species that are restricted to post-fire micro-habitats such as charred wood. He offered no other active management measures that would benefit or negatively impact mycoflora.

2.1.3 Invasive Species

Analysis of Non-native Plant Invasions of a Landscape-scale Site, Kay Sadighi, Frank Lowenstein, Douglas Feick, Jay B. Hestbeck 2004, The Nature Conservancy.

The Nature Conservancy has recently completed a baseline assessment of invasive species within the Berkshire and Taconic region, which provides information relevant to Mount Everett. The research identified specific non native species and geographic "hot spots" and provided supporting statistical analysis. The results of this study indicate that primary roads have the largest percentage (73.5%) of invasive species occurrences compared to interior roads (24%) (Sadighi et al., 2004). Where the Appalachian Trail crosses or is within close proximity of a major road, the incidence of non native species increased. Trail plots assessed within the Mount Everett State Reservation were absent of invasive species. However, within the entire study area, the Appalachian Trail had 7.1% occurrences of invasive species, compared to 0% of the Taconic Trail, which runs parallel to the on the Massachusetts and New York border.

In a separate botanical study completed on the Mount Everett summit in early 2001 (see Section 2.1.1. above), five non-native herbaceous species were recorded (Weatherbee and Childs, 2001). The observed invasive species were concentrated primarily near the fire tower pedestals. The study identified *Agrostis gigantean, A. capillaries, Poa compressa, Hieracium piloselloides*, and *Thymus pulegioides* as non-native.

Both studies concluded that the overall invasive species presence currently on Mount Everett is limited and does not appear to pose a significant threat. However, continued monitoring of species encroachment is necessary to restrict movement and limit the ecological impacts. Early detection and rapid response is the ideal method for addressing invasive species

2.2 Wildlife

A variety of wildlife inhabits and/or migrates through the summit of Mount Everett. These include mammals (e.g., black bear, bobcat, fisher and mink) that range through the forests of the Berkshire and Taconic region. Wildlife studies on the Mount Everett Summit have focused on groups of animals that might be dependent on pitch pine vegetation for part of their life cycle. A summary of these studies is provided below.

2.2.1 Birds

Mount Everett Avian Breeding Season Census and Point Count, Joseph Choiniere, 2000, Massachusetts Audubon Society Center of Biological Conservation

Researchers from the Massachusetts Audubon Society conducted avian studies on the summit of Mount Everett in the summer of 2000. A total of 23 avian species were identified within the dwarf pitch pine community on Mount Everett using the point count surveying method. Avian species use of the summit included migrating, breeding and nesting. (Choiniere, 2000). According to the study, the Eastern Towhee (Pipilo erythrophtalmus), Dark-eyed Junco (Junco hyemalis), Nashville Warbler (Vermivora ruficapilla), Hermit Thrush (Charus guttus), and the Blue Jay (Cyanocitta crista) were seen predominantly over the duration of the observations. Two additional avian species, the Red-eyed Vireo (Vireo olivaceuous) and American Robin (Turdus migrorius), were noted as common along the access road and parking lot.

The avian study, while not exhaustive, highlights a preliminary review of bird habitat and summit usage at Mount Everett. The Eastern Towhee, cited in this study as potentially declining in Massachusetts, was recorded with densities greater than or equal to habitats of similar characteristics with approximately 2.0 territories per hectare. The Dark-eyed Juncos appeared to have overlaying territories among each other and were observed at 6 of the 9 sampling stations. The Nashville Warblers, similar to the Dark-eyed Juncos, had what was believed to be intermingling territories. However, results indicated that the number of habitats within the summit were lower than typical avian research values. The Yellow-rumped Warbler and Hermit Thrush also frequented the summit and surrounding subalpine regions. Species of interest that were not identified during the survey but could potentially occur on Mount Everett given habitat conditions include Bicknell's thrush and worm-eating warbler (Choiniere, pers.comm. 2005).

Informal Observations. 2004. Jack Lash. Ecologist. MA Department of Conservation and Recreation

Informal surveys were conducted by a DCR ecologist in the spring and autumn of 2004. The most significant observation was of a black vulture *(Coragyps rus)* (Lash, pers comm. 2004). Southwest Massachusetts is considered to be at its extreme northern edge of its range. According to the Massachusetts Avian Records Committee (MARC), fewer than five total observations of this species have been recorded. Unofficial sightings have increased in recent years and it is believed that the species is expanding its range northward. The first confirmed nesting of the Black Vulture in Massachusetts occurred in 1999. Other species either seen or heard at or below the summit of Mount Everett included ruffed grouse (*Bonasa umbellus*), grey catbird *(Dumetella caroliniensis*)**,** American goldfinch *(Carduelis tristis*), and raven *(Corvus corax*) (Lash, pers comm. 2004)

2.2.2 Moths

The Macrolepidotera Fauna of Mount Everett, Massachusetts, David L. Wagner, 2000, Ecology & Evolutionary Biology, University of Connecticut

A researcher from the University of Connecticut conducted a preliminary Lepidoteran study (butterflies and moths) on Mount Everett during the summer months in 1998. During the 26 night time sampling visits, 233 different lepidopteron species were identified from the nearly 3,900 individuals collected (Wagner, 2000). Exposed summits, like Mount Everett, act as meeting points for many insects. These areas play a crucial role in their behavior interactions and mating activities. As importantly, the unique plant assemblages atop Mount Everett support populations of many regionally scarce Lepidoptera. The study indicated that Mount Everett is inhabited by both species designed as "threatened" and "special concern" under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA) regulations (321 CMR 10.00) in addition to others deemed uncommon to rare to the region (Wagner, 2000). It should be noted that the designation of some of the identified species have changed since this research was conducted and are noted as such.

Perhaps the most noteworthy moth species observed was Gerhard's Underwing (*Catocala herodias gerhardi*) due to its designation as a "threatened" species at the time of this survey. Currently, Gerhard's Underwing is classified as a "special concern" species under MESA. This moth is classified as G3 by the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program signifying that it is globally rare or uncommon but not imperiled (Wagner, 2000). According to the NHESP fact sheet, Gerhard's Underwing occurs in scrub oak barrens, often with low bush blueberry in the under story, and an open pitch pine canopy. In its early development stage, this moth is dependent upon scrub oak, which abounds at the summit of Mount Everett. Highly unusual to be found within inland barrens and bald summits, the Gerhard's Underwing was previously thought to be restricted to two inland colonies within the Northeast, Hudson Highlands in New York and Canaan Mountain in Connecticut (Wagner, 2000). This moth was the most commonly surveyed Underwing atop of Mount Everett.

Another significant moth species was the Blueberry Sallow *(Apharetra dentata),* where 41 individuals were observed during the course of the survey. At the time of this study this moth was designated as a species of "special concern" under MESA. However, as of 2002, the Blueberry Sallow was de-listed from the Massachusetts List of Endangered, Threatened, and Special Concern Species. The Blueberry Sallow is often considered a bog and pine-barrens species (Wagner, 2000). Commonly associated with stands of low bush blueberry, it's often recorded in barrens dominated by oak canopy. Two other locations within close geographic proximity known for this moth are Canaan Mountain in Connecticut and within Arcadia Wildlife Management Area in Rhode Island (Wagner, 2000).

Several other notable species observed were all originally thought to be restricted to the coastal pine-oak barrens along Cape Cod and Long Island. The Polished Dart *(Euxoa perpolita)*, Maroonwing (*Sideridis maryx*), and Broad Sallow (*Xylotype capax*) were all surveyed at the summit of Mount Everett. While all of these moths are typically associated with scrub oak barrens and blueberry, they are considered uncommon and rare to inland barrens.

Several key and significant findings were noted from this study. First, Mount Everett appears to exhibit environmental characteristics for both southern and northern moth species identified earlier (Wagner, 2000). The physical features and existing flora of the summit apparently serve the life requirements of many of these moths during their larvae stages, courtship, and mating activities.

No management recommendations were noted within this research. However, future comprehensive surveys were advised to fill the data gaps of seasonal species and to better document habitat and suitable hosts. The Listing of Lepidoptera as rare species most often results from the loss of or long term impacts to the host plants for those species. Many of the butterfly and moth species recorded by qualified scientists on Mount Everett Summit rely upon the Pitch/Pine/Scrub Oak ridge–top plant community. As indicated above, the summit of Mt. Everett features host plants for both northern resident species and some southern species at the north extent of their known range. The NHESP fact sheet identifies management recommendations for the Gerhard's Underwing to consist of periodic and patchy fires to maintain the scrub oak habitat and vegetation composition. However, it is reported that prescribed fires that are conducted too frequently or severe wildfires can have adverse impacts in specific moth populations, as well as to certain lichens. According to the NHESP regarding Lepidoptera populations, recolonization from adjacent unburned areas is usually rapid, and fire can result in conditions favoring larger populations, or a net benefit. The use of insecticides should not be used due to their known adverse affects.

2.3 Cultural Resources

Although Native Americans are known to have been in the vicinity of Mount Everett for several thousand years, generally the frequency of archaeological sites is low in the rugged Berkshire uplands and there are no recorded sites within the Reservation at any altitude, much less at the Summit. Similarly, the historic use of land that comprises the reservation was ephemeral and did not leave much of a mark on the landscape. As the remains of the Thomas Caid house (1842) attests farming occurred in limited and dispersed locations at lower elevations, as did lumbering. However, because of its rugged upland terrain and excessive slopes human habitation has remained remarkably low in a good portion of this section of the Berkshires.

Historically, the summit has been associated with fire fighting, as three towers occupied Mount Everett's open top. The first tower was built in 1918, the second in 1945 and the

third in 1970. The last tower stood approximately 100 north of the original and it was removed (airlifted by helicopter) in 2003. Only the concrete piers for two of the towers survive to this day as historic archaeological remains.

The principal cultural resource of Mount Everett is the Appalachian Trail itself and two USGS Bench Marks. The threats to these resources are nominal and because DCR has classified the Summit as Zone 1, which affords resources there (both natural or cultural), the highest level of protection, the Land Stewardship management guidelines as outlined in the Mount Everett Resource Management Plan are more than sufficient. The cultural resources that exist on the Summit are neither particularly fragile unique or significant, and no further restrictions and/or limitations are required to protect them.

2.4 Recreation

2.4.1 Public Access

A gravel access road rises approximately 1.5 miles from East Street to a (former) upper parking area, increasing in elevation from 1,700 to 2,600 feet. Two parking areas are located at the low and mid elevation points along this access road, and a former parking area is located closer to the Summit. The first parking area is approximately 500 feet east of the East Road at an elevation of 1,720 feet. The second parking area, the largest of the three, is located to the southeast of Guilder Pond and provides access to the Guilder Pond area, the Guilder Pond Loop Trail, and the Appalachian Trail. The third parking area is no longer open for public vehicular access. It includes a stone lean-to shelter and is located about 0.5 miles up a steep gravel way above the Guilder Pond parking area.

The Mount Everett access road serves as one of the primary means to reach the summit. Since 2002 the access road has been closed to vehicle traffic (except for emergency vehicles) because of erosion and the need to replace damaged culverts. Road maintenance and culvert improvements on a small section of the access road south of Guilder Pond were completed in 2005. However, severe rainstorms in the fall of 2005 resulted in damage to portions of the road, and additional work will be required in the spring of 2006 before vehicle access is again possible from East Street to the Guilder Pond parking area. The section of the road from the Guilder Pond parking area to the former upper parking area is eroded and will remain closed to vehicular traffic, except for emergency access.

2.4.2 Recreational Use

Recreational use of the summit area is limited to hiking and scenic viewing. Day hikers generally access the summit area from the access road and the Guilder Pond area. An unknown number of through hikers, section hikers, and weekend hikers follow the Appalachian Trail as it traverses the summit area. The Appalachian Trail (AT) is over 2,100 miles long, spanning fourteen states from Georgia to Maine. Within

Massachusetts, the AT traverses 89 miles from the southwestern to the northwestern corners of the State, between Connecticut and Vermont. The construction of the AT was completed in 1937 and it was designated as a National Scenic Trail in 1968 with the enactment of the National Trails System Act.

Over 50 miles of the 89 miles of the AT located in Massachusetts are within State-owned lands, while nearly 40 miles reside within property owned by the National Park Service. Approximately 2.5 miles of the AT is within the Mount Everett State Reservation. The Trail climbs the southern ridgeline of Mount Everett to its summit and then descends the northern slope, parallel to the access road, passing near Guilder Pond and east of Mount Undine in the northern edge of the Reservation. The Guilder Pond Loop Trail forks from the AT, near the mid parking area, and skirts the perimeter of Guilder Pond. The only trails within the Mount Everett State Reservation that DCR manages and maintains are the AT, the side trails to designed shelters and the Guilder Pond Loop Trail.

Less than a mile from both the Mount Everett summit and Guilder Pond are two designated shelter areas, Hemlock Shelter and Glen Brook Shelter. Hemlock Shelter, the larger of the two, was built in 2001 and has bunk and loft accommodations. Approximately one-tenth of a mile away from the Hemlock Shelter is the smaller Glen Brook Shelter, which provides three tent platforms. Camping is only allowed at these shelters and tent platforms. Fires are only permitted at designated fire pits at these shelters. Water is available at both of these shelters. According to data gathered in 2005 from shelter registers, approximately 420 people signed in at the Hemlocks Shelter and 210 people signed in at the Glen Brook Shelter. These hikers included through hikers, section hikers, day hikers and groups. These figures represent perhaps half of those who actually visit the shelters, and do not include those who hike the AT but no not stop or visit the shelters.

The estimated annual attendance for the Mount Everett Reservation for 2002-2005 is 10,000. This number can be expected to increase when all of the repairs to the access road to the Guilder Pond parking area are completed.

Although there are several evident sources of recreational impacts at Mount Everett, degradation is minimal. Several secondary trails at the summit were formed as hikers wandered toward the old fire tower. Since its removal in 2003, hardwood vegetation and under story shrubs have overgrown part of these unauthorized trails. Due to the narrow width of the Appalachian Trail at Mount Everett, there is minimal erosion and soil compaction. Leading up to the summit, the dense and short-stature vegetation concentrates hikers and restricts them from straying off of the Appalachian Trail. Most of the Appalachian Trail is well marked with its white trail blaze. Litter is occasionally seen; but the “carry in/carry out” program has worked well in the Mount Everett State Reservation. In several locations, notably near the upper parking area and Guilder Pond, evidence of illegal campfires was found.

2.4.3 Scenic Views

The Mount Everett Summit includes several natural bedrock outcroppings that provide scenic views along the Appalachian Trail near the summit. The 1982 DEM Scenic Landscape Inventory classifies the summit of Mount Everett as a "Distinctive" landscape feature, which is the highest classification of the inventory. View sheds to the west and southwest are "Noteworthy" while those to the south, southeast, east, and north are considered "Distinctive" or "Noteworthy" (DEM, 1982).

Historic photographs indicate that the summit once provided a complete 360º unobstructed panoramic view of the surrounding landscape. While recent growth of the summit hardwoods has obstructed some of these roundabout views; there are still several natural outcroppings adjacent to the Appalachian Trail both on the summit and at lower elevations that offer vantage points with outstanding views.

2.5 Current Management Guidelines

Visitor activities in the Mount Everett State Reservation are managed by DCR. This section summarizes the main management programs.

2.5.1 State Parks and Recreation Rules

Activities in Massachusetts State Parks and Forests are prescribed in 304 Code of Massachusetts Regulations (CMR) 12.00. Restrictions pertaining to Mount Everett State Reservation include:

- Camping is allowed only at Hemlock Shelter and Glen Brook Shelter.
- Fires are allowed only at existing fire pits at shelters.
- Foot traffic is allowed only on DCR trail systems and should stay within their boundaries.
- Carry in/carry out policy is in effect for trash.
- Consuming of drugs/alcohol is not allowed, except for prescription medications or medicines for emergency medical use.
- Hunting is prohibited within Mount Everett State Reservation.
- Snow vehicles, off-road vehicles (ORVs), horses, and bicycles are not allowed.
- No structures can be erected except camping equipment.
- Unclean and unsanitary campsites are not allowed.
- Cutting of standing trees is not allowed.

- Defacing, displacing, removing, or tampering with buildings, bridges, tables, benches, fireplaces, water sources, signs, boundary markers, or other public structures or equipment is not allowed.

- The use of metal detectors is not allowed (M.G.L. chapter 92, section 37, as amended).

2.5.2 ACEC Program

The boundary of Schenob Brook Drainage Basin Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) follows the approximate location of the Appalachian Trail, essentially bisecting the summit area. However, for practical purposes, the entire summit area should be considered a critical area and managed as such.

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) are designed for lands with important ecological systems that are important to the health and well-being of the Commonwealth. The ACEC regulations (301 CMR 12.00) describe the purpose and procedures for the nomination, review, and designation of ACECs. Because ACECs include both public and private lands, Massachusetts general laws include provisions in many different regulations to ensure that activities in ACECs meet the highest environmental protection standards of Massachusetts Law. The more pertinent provisions which may apply to Mount Everett are summarized as follows:

DCR's High Ground Telecommunications Policy was adopted by the Board of Environmental Management in July of 1999. The policy states in part that "it shall be the policy of the DEM that no private telecommunications use of any tower located within a designed ACEC shall be authorized."

The Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) regulations (301 CMR 11.00) require that projects located in an ACEC conducted by a state agency or requiring a state permit or involving state funding, must submit an Environmental Notification Form to the Secretary of Environmental Affairs for review and approval. DCR's previous and later changed proposal to repair the fire tower on the summit of Mount Everett triggered MEPA review.

The Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act (MWPA) regulations (310 CMR 10.00) prohibit projects that fill 5,000 square feet or greater of bordering vegetated wetlands (BVW) in ACECs, and in some cases, projects that propose to fill 500 square feet of BVW. DCR filed the necessary application with the Town of Mount Washington Conservation Commission before developing final plans for the culvert replacement work on the gravel access road.

The Department of Conservation and Recreation administers the ACEC Program on behalf of the Secretary of the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs. Currently there

are twenty eight ACECs covering approximately 241,000 acres in seventy three communities across the Commonwealth. Additional information about the Schenob Brook ACEC and the ACEC Program is available at www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/acec/.

2.5.3 Appalachian Trail Conference

The Secretary of the Interior has legal responsibility over the Appalachian Trail. However, depending on the property ownership, the rules and regulations for the Appalachian Trail can be administered by the National Park Service (NPS), United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service (USDA-FS), a State agency, and/or local agencies and organizations. In 1984, specific management responsibilities for the Appalachian Trail on federally-owned lands were granted by the NPS to the Appalachian Trial Conference. Outside of law enforcement, the Appalachian Trail Conference coordinates much of the day-to-day activities and management along the Appalachian Trail on NPS-owned property

Much of the Massachusetts Section of the Appalachian Trail passes through lands managed by DCR, including the section through Mount Everett State Reservation. DCR partners with the Appalachian Trail Conference, National Park Service, the Berkshire Chapter of The Appalachian Club, and other agencies and organizations in the management of the Appalachian Trail in Massachusetts. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), signed in October 2003 describes the responsibilities and actions of the various signatories. This agreement acknowledges the Appalachian Trail as both a federal and state resource that should be managed with specific policies and resources unique to each geographic area. DCR has primary responsibility of managing and protecting the 50 miles of the Appalachian Trail that are located on state-owned public lands.

3.0 SUMMIT LAND STEWARDSHIP ZONING GUIDELINES

3.1 Land Stewardship Zoning Guidelines

DCR applies a Land Stewardship Zoning Guidelines (Guidelines) system to its parks, forests and reservations across the Commonwealth. The Guidelines are intended to provide a general land stewardship zoning framework that is flexible and that can guide the long-term management of a given DCR property or facility. The Guidelines define three types of zones to provide for the protection and stewardship of natural and cultural resources and to ensure consistency between recreation, resource protection, and sustainable forest management. Land Stewardship Zoning Guidelines provide a foundation for recommendations that will address resource stewardship and facility management objectives, and are intended to cover both existing DCR property or facility conditions and desired future conditions for that property or facility. The Guidelines include the use three zones (in decreasing order of resource sensitivity): Zone 1, Zone 2 and Zone 3. (See Appendix A for more information.)

Zone 1: This zone includes unique, exemplary and highly sensitive resources and landscapes that require special management approaches and practices to protect and preserve the special features and values identified in the specific Resource Management Plan. Examples of these resources include rare species habitat identified by the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program as being highly sensitive to human activities, fragile archaeological sites, and unique or exemplary natural communities. Management objectives emphasize protecting these areas from potentially adverse disturbances and impacts.

Zone 2: This Zone includes land areas containing typical yet important natural and cultural resources on which common forestry practices and dispersed recreational activities can be practiced at sustainable levels that do not degrade these resources and that hold potential for improving their ecological health, productivity and/or protection through active management. Examples include managed woodlands with terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems characterized by a diversity of wildlife and plant habitats, rare species habitat that is compatible with sustainable forestry and dispersed recreation, agricultural resources, resilient cultural sites and landscapes, and backcountry camping areas. Zone 2 areas may be actively managed provided that the management activities are consistent with the approved Resource Management Plan for the property.

Zone 3: This zone includes constructed or developed administrative, maintenance and recreation sites, structures and resilient landscapes which accommodate concentrated use by recreational visitors and require intensive maintenance by DCR staff. Examples include park headquarters and maintenance areas, parking lots, swimming pools and skating rinks, paved bikeways, swimming beaches, campgrounds, playgrounds and athletic fields, parkways, golf courses, picnic areas and pavilions, concessions, and areas assessed to be suitable for those uses.

Based on the resource inventory and analysis and public/private input, the Plan provides that the Mount Everett Summit area and Buffer Zone should be classified as Zone 1 to offer the highest level of protection to the unique natural resources on the summit.

The Mount Everett Summit area is approximately 35 acres in area and is defined primarily as land above the 2500-foot Contour Elevation. The Mount Everett Summit Area Buffer Zone is approximately 69 acres in area and is defined as land between the 2400-foot Contour Elevation and the 2500-foot Contour Elevation.

Zone 1 is the most protective category within DCR's Guidelines system. It is applied to those portions of a property which contain very sensitive resources which are highly vulnerable to human activity. This level of protection substantively restricts the types and levels of activity that are permissible within a given area, on the basis that certain activities may adversely impact the resources supported within that location. General management guidelines for this zone are:

- Only dispersed, low-impact, non-motorized, sustainable recreation will be allowed provided that the activities do not threaten or impact unique and highly sensitive resources.

- Existing trails and roads will be evaluated to ensure compatibility with identified resource features and landscape, and will be discontinued if there are suitable sustainable alternatives. New trails may be constructed only after a strict evaluation of need and avoidance of any potential adverse impacts on identified resources. New roads may only be constructed to meet public health and safety needs or requirements; however, the project design and siting process must avoid any potential adverse impacts on identified resources and demonstrate that there are no other suitable alternatives.

- Vegetation or forest management will be utilized only to preserve and enhance identified resource features and landscapes.

On Mount Everett Summit, the Zone 1 classification reflects the presence of a unique dwarf pitch pine community which hosts rare moth and lichen species, as well as other natural resource values described in the text.

(Note: Although no significant cultural resources have been recorded on the Summit, should they exist the Zone 1 classification automatically affords the appropriate level of protection.)

4.0 MANAGEMENT GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND PLAN IMPLEMENTATION SUCCESS INDICATORS

Based on the recommendations of the scientific studies described in Section 2 of this Plan and agency and public comments, the DCR Planning Team developed the following Management Goal and Objectives to assist DCR staff and other interested parties in the stewardship of Mount Everett Summit. Plan Implementation Success Indicators were also developed as a yard stick to help determine if the Goal and Objectives of the Plan are being met successfully.

MANAGEMENT GOAL FOR MOUNT EVERETT SUMMIT

Afford Mount Everett summit the highest protection so that it can continue to serve as a premier natural laboratory for the study, understanding and appreciation of the dwarf pitch pine/oak community and to afford the walking public superb views of the southern Berkshire mountains and valleys.

PLAN OBJECTIVES AND IMPLEMENTATION SUCCESS INDICATORS

4.1 Vegetation

4.1.1 Dwarf Pitch Pine/Oak Community

Objective: Sustain, enhance and monitor the dwarf pitch pine/oak community and promote continued scientific study of this nationally unique resource.

Plan Implementation Success Indicators:

- Mount Everett Summit dwarf pitch pine/oak community continues to be recognized by scientists as an important example of the pitch pine community
- scientists continue to undertake field studies to better understand this resource

4.1.2 Lichen/Fungi

Objective: Protect lichens from alteration from passive recreational activities and undertake studies to understand the broader habitat aspects of their occurrence.

Plan Implementation Success Indicators:

- limiting the impact of foot traffic has been successful
- long-term monitoring and scientific studies have been undertaken

4.1.3 Invasive Species

Objective: Understand the threat of invasive species to the Mount Everett Summit and manage resource protection and recreational activity to minimize their presence and impact.

Plan Implementation Success Indicators:

- summit remains invasive species free
- colonizing species are quickly identified and removed

4.2 Wildlife Management

4.2.1 Birds

Objective: Maintain avian diversity characteristic of rocky ridge tops.

Plan Implementation Success Indicators:

- ongoing bird counts and surveys reflect results characteristic of rocky ridge tops
- bird counts and other surveys are an annual occurrence

4.2.2 Moths

Objective: Monitor moth populations as indicator of changes in vegetation cover and conduct additional research on the summit moth populations.

Plan Implementation Success Indicators:

- additional research on summit moth population has been undertaken
- presence of moth population is indicative of dwarf pitch pine canopy

4.3 Recreation

4.3.1 Access/visitor safety

Objective: Provide visitor access to the summit via the Appalachian Trail and via the access road leading to the Appalachian Trail and continue emergency response procedures to insure visitor safety.

Plan Implementation Success Indicators:

- scientists and walking public have access to the summit
- hiking traffic has minimal impact on trail bordering vegetation

- visitor emergencies are addressed expediently
- emergency vehicles have access to the upper parking lot

4.3.2 Appalachian Trail

Objective: Coordinate with the Appalachian Trail Conference and the

Appalachian Mountain Club to ensure that the segment of the Appalachian Trail that passes over Mount Everett summit meets the established recreational and environmental standards.

Plan Implementation Success Indicators:

- 2003 Memorandum of Understanding between the Appalachian Trail Conference and DCR is fully implemented and revised as warranted and renewed as scheduled
- this segment of the Appalachian Trail is maintained according to Appalachian Trail Conference and National Park Service standards
- passing over Mount Everett summit continues to be a highlight for through hikers

4.3.3 Scenic Views

Objective: Utilize the natural bedrock outcroppings on and adjacent to the Appalachian Trail on the summit, lower elevations and upper parking lot as scenic vistas for the public

Plan Implementation Success Indicator:

- scenic vistas of the surrounding countryside are available for the public viewing

4.3.4 Visitor Stewardship

Objective: Through interpretative signage, highlight to hikers the areas of important natural communities and educate the general public on proper mountain etiquette manners for protecting this fragile environment.

Plan Implementation Success Indicators:

- the summit environment does not show signs of significant impact from human visitors
- the number of violations of the rules and regulations is limited
- the public and student knowledge of the unique resources of Mount Everett increases

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5.0 ACTION STEPS

Sections 1.0 and 2.0 characterize the natural resources and recreational activities on the summit of Mount Everett as they presently exist. The information demonstrates that Mount Everett is a vital public resource due to its unique ecology, scenic beauty, and passive recreational opportunities. As such, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) seeks to manage activities on the Mount Everett summit to sustain its biological importance while allowing access from the walking public to enjoy and appreciate its natural setting.

This section of the Mount Everett Reservation Summit Resource Management Plan describes the management objectives, the management context and recommended action steps for resource protection and recreational activities. The resource management action steps are centered on sustaining and enhancing the dwarf pitch pine scrub oak community and the other characteristic species of the summit. The recreational recommendations seek to enhance visitor experience, while ensuring the protection of the summit's unique ecology. Each issue area is organized with a management objective, context for completing management, and action items.

5.1 Vegetation

5.1.1 Dwarf Pitch Pine / Oak Community

Objective: Sustain, enhance and monitor the dwarf pitch pine/oak community and promote continued scientific study of this nationally unique resource.

Management Context:

The ridge top Dwarf Pitch Pine / Oak Community is a rare natural community with broad ecological characteristics. Recent studies suggest hardwood vegetation cover has increased on the Mount Everett summit, although the cause and potential consequences for the dwarf pitch pine / oak community are not well understood. Pitch pine has seemingly persisted atop Mount Everett in the absence of any documented wild land fires or significant disturbance (apart from ice and wind storms which can occur on the summit). While the pitch pine has apparently adapted to the absence of fire, it is believed that the lack of fire or other disturbance may be allowing increased growth of hardwood species.

Traditional land management practices employed to favor pitch pine are accomplished by a man-induced, controlled fire (also known as a prescribed burn). The physical characteristics and current conditions of the Mount Everett Summit present substantial challenges to planning and executing controlled burns. Mount Everett is one of the tallest mountains within the Southern Taconic Range and is the sixth highest summit in Massachusetts. The summit is generally windy and subjected to dramatic fluctuations in

weather conditions. The ability to control and govern the direction and intensity of a prescribed burn on an exposed summit risks potential detrimental environmental impacts and public safety. In addition, the use of fire to manage the dwarf pitch pine could have substantial adverse impacts to other significant summit based natural resources, such as the lichen and moth species.

Summit vegetation should be monitored annually to assess vegetation canopy structure and the dominance of the dwarf pitch pine regeneration community relevant to the other species on the summit. DCR and the summit scientists should review the annual monitoring to determine if and what steps should be taken to preserve the viability of the summit dwarf pitch pine community.

Action Items:

- Continue field studies of the summit's flora and fauna.
- Develop a vegetation monitoring and vegetation management protocol.
- Survey and delineate existing stands of dwarf pitch pine.
- Conduct monitoring and prepare an annual monitoring report.
- When needed, undertake summit vegetation management, using appropriate technique(s) based on the then best available scientific knowledge.

5.1.2 Lichen/Fungi

Objective: Protect lichens from alteration from recreational activities and undertake studies to understand the broader habitat aspects of their occurrence.

Management Context:

As described in Section 2.1.3, a lichen inventory conducted on the summit of Mount Everett identified several species unique to the State, the Northeast region, and North America. These species were found scattered across the summit and were not concentrated in specific locations. Because of the scattered lichen distribution on the Mount Everett Summit, management activities should address conservation of the entire summit as lichen habitat rather than individual and isolated populations. As noted by the author of the lichen inventory, fire and physical abrasions from hikers represent the most significant threats to lichen communities.

Recommendations:

Protective measures, rather than active management measures, are sought for the conservation of the summit based lichen. Natural and human threats to lichen survival

have been identified, including fire and direct contact from humans. The prevention of human induced fire events, or hikers wandering off the Appalachian Trail would greatly improve the survival of the lichen. To limit the wandering foot traffic, especially at the exposed summit bedrock, the Appalachian Trail should be clearly marked to discourage hikers from straying away from the trail. Interpretive signs, at the parking areas, on the summit or along the trail, should be constructed to educate the hiker about the ecological significance and the sensitivity of the area to the potential impacts of off-trail movement. Due to the significant nature of the unique species of lichens found on the summit, continued lichen studies should be conducted by a lichenologist. Research objectives should expand on the information generated in previous inventories and gather new information to understand the habitat considerations that sustain populations.

Action Items:

- Continue lichen field studies to expand on current knowledge and to better understand habitat considerations that sustain populations.
- Place signs at appropriate locations to direct summit hikers to stay on authorized trails.
- Monitor lichen community on the summit by lichen specialist.

5.1.3 Invasive Species

Objective: Understand the threats of invasive species to the Mount Everett summit and manage resource protection and recreational activity programs to minimize presence and impacts.

Management Context:

Two separate studies have collected information on invasive species on Mount Everett. The Weatherbee study identified five non-native herbaceous species at the concrete pedestals of the removed fire towers. The Nature Conservancy's regional study of the Southern Taconic Mountains indicated that no invasive species were present at sites in the Reservation and a relatively low percentage (7.1%) of invasive species was found along the plots along the within the entire Berkshire and Taconic landscape. The Weatherbee and The Nature Conservancy studies indicate that invasive species were not an ecological threat to Mount Everett under the current conditions.

Recommendations:

Based on the information outlined in The Nature Conservancy's report, occurrences of invasive species are greater along road and trail corridors. There was no correlation specified between the low invasive species occurrences on Mount Everett summit and the limited vehicle access following the closure of the access road. However, the likelihood

of non-native species presence is greater with increased accessibility. It is recommended that continued monitoring of species presence and potential encroachment is necessary. Through periodic field observations, non-native species presence can be documented and geographically tallied with the use of GPS. The ideal management recommendation is through early detection and rapid response to limit the occurrences of invasive species and their ability to spread.

Action Items:

- Apply existing invasive species monitoring and control methods to allow early detection and to facilitate rapid response to limit occurrence and the ability to spread.
- Identify recreational activities that might contribute to the spread of invasives and work with stakeholders to minimize impacts.

5.2 Wildlife Management

In general, management for wildlife should be directed by the management program for enhancing the dwarf pitch pine / oak community.

5.2.1 Birds

Objective: Maintain avian diversity characteristic of rocky ridge tops.

Management Context:

An avian study, while not exhaustive, highlighted a preliminary review of bird presence and summit usage of Mount Everett. Similar to many representative summits, Mount Everett's avian usage varied between migrating, breeding, and nesting among bird species. The study as supported by existing information indicates that the summit does not provide habitat for any rare or otherwise significant bird species.

Recommendations:

No immediate management recommendations are recommended at this time. Presence-absence tallies should be conducted to evaluate any changes in avian use of the summit.

Action Items:

- Develop an avian monitoring plan.
- Continue to conduct Breeding Bird Surveys and conduct raptor migration counts.
- Prepare annual report summarizing the monitoring and surveys.

5.2.2 Moths

Objective: Monitor moth populations as an indicator of changes in vegetation cover and conduct additional research on the summit's moth population.

Objective: Monitor and address potential threats to moth populations, such as aerial spraying of pesticides and non-specific parasites such as *Compsilura concinnata*.

Management Context:

The summit based Lepidoptera study resulted in nearly 3,900 individual moths collected representing over 230 different species. Although the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA) designation has recently changed for several of the moths highlighted in the initial report, their significance is nonetheless important in terms of their presence, protection, or dependence on Mount Everett's unique natural environment. Currently, Gerhard's Underwing is listed as a species of "special concern" under MESA. It was the most commonly surveyed Underwing, even though it was previously thought to be restricted to two inland colonies within the Northeast. The Blueberry Sallow (recently de-listed) and several other species were recorded, an important finding given that they are uncommon inland, high elevation locations. These moths are often restricted to scrub oak and blueberry vegetation for much of their development stages and interaction and mating activities. The Gerhard's Underwing is typically associated with open pitch pine canopies.

According to the Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (NHESP), threats to moth populations include aerial spraying of pesticides and the release of non-specific parasites such as *Compsilura concinnata,* released in 1906 for gypsy moth control. *Compsilura* has an affinity for habitats with closed canopies, so maintaining areas low in structural characteristics with few canopy trees would benefit the rare Lepidoptera population and the dwarf pitch pine conservation targets.

Recommendations:

The Mount Everett Lepidoptera surveyed is greatly dependent upon the existing vegetation and physical characteristics of the summit. Due to the Gerhard's Underwing dependence of the dwarf pitch pine, the canopy structure needs to be monitored to insure that it persists to insure proper habitat conditions. No aerial spraying of pesticides should be undertaken. Assess actions to maintain areas low in structural characteristics with few canopy trees as part of an overall vegetative management plan.

Action Items:

- Continue Lepidoptera survey to address seasonal species and better account for suitable habitat and hosts.

- Consult with NHESP prior to any summit management activities to assess impact on moths.

5.3 Recreation

5.3.1 Public Access/Visitor Safety

Objective: Provide pedestrian access to the summit via the Appalachian Trail and gravel road, visitor safety and fire control.

Management Context:

Although the existing parking areas are outside the scope of the Summit Management Plan, they are discussed in the context of access to the summit. Parking areas support public access to Guilder Pond, the Appalachian Trail, designated shelters, and the summit of Mount Everett. Access road improvements are being implemented to allow potential public vehicular access between the lower and Guilder Pond parking areas. A gate has been installed to block vehicle access to the former upper parking area from the Guilder Pond area parking. However, repairs to this section of the gravel road to provide emergency access to the former upper parking area from the Guilder Pond area are now required. These repairs are a high priority. Following the anticipated opening of the access road to the Guilder parking area, increased public access to the summit may require park staff to undertake measures to enhance education and install signage to avoid an increase in impacts.

Fire control protocols between DCR Bureau of Forest Fire Control and municipal fire departments establish the procedures for the suppression of wild fires within the Mount Everett State Reservation to include the summit of Mount Everett. These protocols provide for the containment and control of all wildfires. They have proven the test of time and should be continued. As discussed in the previous section 5.1.1 Dwarf Pitch Pine/Oak Community, prescribed burns are not considered a viable option to manage dwarf pitch pine due to the difficulty of controlling such a burn on the summit and possible substantial adverse impacts that such a burn would have on the lichen and moth species.

Recommendations:

A locked gate has been installed to restrict traffic to the upper portions of the access road, due to its current culvert conditions and highly eroded surface. The upper portions of the access road need to be repaired and maintained in a condition that is passable for emergency vehicles, should a hiking accident or other emergency occur.

Action Items:

- Repair road erosion and replace culverts along the upper section of the road above Guilder Pond.

- Meet with public safety agencies to reinforce and coordinate emergency response procedures for summit incidents.

- Meet with Bureau of Forest Fire Control and adjacent town forest fire wardens to review and update fire suppression protocols for the Mount Everett Summit Area.

- Monitor visitor use and activities in the reservation.

5.3.2 Appalachian Trail

Objective: Coordinate with the Appalachian Trail Conference (ATC) and Massachusetts Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) organizations to ensure that the segment of the Appalachian Trail passes over Mount Everett meets the established recreational and environmental standards.

Management Context:

The Appalachian Trail (AT) is the only formal means of access to the summit of Mount Everett for AT hikers. A myriad of secondary trails extending from the AT to the last fire tower have been developed over the years. Since the removal for the fire tower, however, vegetation regeneration comprised primarily of hardwoods has grown over many of these secondary trails confining hikers to the AT. By design, the narrow width of the AT over the Mount Everett summit minimizes erosion impacts and soil compaction.

Recommendations:

Several modest improvements can be implemented to improve use of the AT and protect the summit's ecology. The length of the AT is blazed by white paint applied to tree trunks or stone markers. These markings can fade overtime and therefore must be monitored and maintained. The segment of the AT that traverses the Mount Everett Summit is subject to harsh weather conditions which require particular diligence in monitoring trail markings. Fresh blazes should be applied to the Trail, primarily within the summit region to ensure that hikers remain on the Trail and do not establish secondary trails. Furthermore, DCR and the ATC staff in conjunction with local members of the AMC should coordinate all management activities in accordance of the 2003 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). New paint blazes should adhere to the Design, Construction, and Maintenance Policy of the ATC.

Action Items:

- Coordinate any proposed management activities on the Appalachian Trail with the ATC and local AMC.
- Apply summit blazes consistent with the guidelines established by ATC policy.
- Remove spray paint on the old fire tower pedestals.
- Continue Appalachian Trail monitoring on a regular basis by DCR Ridge Runner, DCR staff and volunteers to ensure hiker safety, resource protection and consistency with the Plan's goal and objectives.

5.3.3 Scenic Views

Objective: Utilize the natural bedrock outcroppings on and adjacent to the Appalachian Trail on the summit, lower elevations and the upper parking lot as scenic vistas for the public appreciation of the natural beauty of the southern Berkshires.

Management Context:

There are several natural bedrock outcroppings that provide scenic views adjacent to the Appalachian Trail on or near the summit. Historic accounts reveal that Mount Everett's summit once yielded a 360º unobstructed views of the surrounding landscape. The roundabout views have since been altered with the growth and canopy dominance of the summit hardwoods. However, some natural openings still exist.

Recommendations:

The physical characteristics of Mount Everett Summit have resulted in natural bedrock openings and scenic view areas that offer excellent panoramic views of the surrounding countryside. Scenic views are also available from the stone shelter located in the former upper parking area.

Small well-placed signs reading "view with a directional arrow" will help to direct hikers and protect the summit's fragile resources. Without signs and maintained access points, visitors tend to wander to obtain a view. Limiting access to the few existing points will help to reinforce interpretive signage that asks users to stay on the trail and protect the ecology of the summit.

Action Items:

- Monitor and maintain scenic vista locations to ensure that they retain their integrity.
- Provide foot access to scenic view areas via existing access points from the Appalachian Trail.

- Maintain and restore the scenic view at the former upper parking area, and undertake repairs to the roof of the stone shelter.

5.3.4 Visitor Stewardship

Objective: Highlight to hikers the areas of important natural communities and educate the general public on proper mountain etiquette for protecting this fragile environment.

Management Context:

DCR assists the public to enjoy and appreciate the natural beauty of the State Parks and Forests. Appropriate signage is useful to heighten hikers and outdoor enthusiasts experience and to make them aware of actions that would detract from the protection of the natural resources and other visitors' experience.

Recommendations:

Interpretive signs at the parking lots should be designed to educate visitors of the uniqueness and sensitivity of the summit's natural resources and how they can be good stewards while they are enjoying the incredible views of the southern Berkshires from the summit. Well-designed signs placed in appropriate locations that do not detract from the summit's natural setting would help to improve the public's experience while visiting the reservation. Recommended signage includes interpretive signs describing the summit's unique and sensitive habitats and species; signs prohibiting overnight parking (for access to the AT or shelters), except at the lower gate near East Street; signs clearly stating that camping and fires are prohibited except in designated areas and signs advising of DCR's "Carry In/Carry Out" policy.

Action Items:

- Design interpretative signs/brochures describing the unique ecology of the summit, the Appalachian Trail and the role of the public in protecting this environment.
- Design site specific educational material describing invasive species issues and preventive measures.
- Post signs at the parking areas on allowable and prescribed public activities.

- Coordinate with private groups interested in Mount Everett (such as the Appalachian Mountain Club-Berkshire Chapter, the Friends of Mount Everett and Green Berkshires, Inc. etc.) to implement projects to enhance the stewardship of the summit.

- Work with local schools to integrate the Mount Everett ecological studies into school science curriculum.

6.0 ACTION STEPS IMPLEMENTATION

The following section lists the actions steps to be taken to guide the future implementation of the Mount Everett Summit Resource Management Plan. Action steps are organized by under categories associated with natural resource management and public access and uses. The following topics are addressed:

- Vegetation
- Lichen / Fungi
- Birds
- Moths
- Recreation / Access / Pubic Safety
- Appalachian Trail / Scenic Views

For each issue area, action items are listed with recommendations for lead organization, collaborators, timeframe, and estimate and source of resources needed. These recommendations are based on knowledge of interest in the subject areas and initial discussion with some of the listed organizations. These recommendations do not imply firm commitment to undertake these activities. It is anticipated that this section will be carefully considered during the public review phase of the Plan and refined based on input from the organizations.

The information is presented in a tabular format to ease reader access to the recommendations and to facilitate regular updating.

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Photograph #1

Cones from the Pitch Pine

Photograph #2

View from the Mount Everett Summit

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Project	Lead	Collaborators	Timeframe	Estimate of Resources Needed
VEGETATION				
Continue field studies of the summit's flora and fauna	Mount Everett Coalition	DCR Liaison: DCR ecologist DCR Regional Director & S. Berkshire District Management Forester Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (NHESP) State Botanist Un. of Massachusetts Dept. of Botany DCR and EOEA-Office of Public-Private partnerships for all projects	ongoing	**Personnel** *Lead (Mount Everett Coalition)*: provides inspiration, funding & oversight of the summit research (ongoing) *DCR ecologist & forester:* liaison and peer review (hours to be determined per study) *Scientists:* field work and report preparation and publication *DCR and/or private* – GIS map flora and fauna studies (3 days per study) **Cost:** *studies:* private financing (GIS mapping-DCR staff normal working hours (operating account) or private financing
Develop summit vegetation monitoring plan and vegetation management protocol	To be determined	DCR Liaison: DCR S. Berkshire Dist, management forester DCR Regional Director DCR ecologist NHESP-state botanist N.E. Wildflower Society N.E. Plant Conservation Program	2005	**Personnel** *Lead(to be determined)*: conceptualize and draft monitoring protocol, arrange site visit, solicit review and finalize protocol (2 weeks) *DCR Liaison (district forester)*: provide DCR oversight and linkage, site visit, contribute ideas, review draft protocol (15 hours) *DCR ecologist*: site visit, contribute ideas and review draft protocol (15 hours) *Scientists NHESP, NEWS, NEPCOP*: site visit, contribute ideas and/or review draft: 8 hours each: site visit, contribute ideas and/or review draft: 12 hours **Cost**: DCR staff – normal working hours (operating account); scientists- volunteer- NHESP- existing staff time

Project	Lead	Collaborators	Timeframe	Estimate of Resources Needed
VEGETATION (continued)				
Conduct vegetation monitoring and prepare an annual monitoring report When needed, undertake summit vegetation management	To be determined	DCR-liaison: DCR S. Berkshire District Management Forester DCR regional director NHESP Volunteer scientist	2006 & annually	**Personnel** *Lead (to be determined)*: summit vegetation monitoring: (one person - 2 days), prepare report: (2 days) *DCR liaison:* provide DCR linkage, review draft report (1 day) **Cost:** DCR staff: normal working hours (operating account); scientist –volunteer; printing report-private funding
Survey and delineate (extent, destiny & no.) existing stands of dwarf pitch pine	DCR S. Berkshire District Management Forester	Summer intern or volunteer scientist UMass Botany Department	2006	**Personnel** *Lead (DCR district forester*): survey, design, oversight (3 days) *Intern*: undertake survey, delineation (2 months) *DCR-GIS*: prepare survey/delineation maps (3 days) **Cost**: DCR staff –normal working hours (operating account); intern-stipend or work study
Apply existing invasive species monitoring and control methods to allow early detection and to facilitate rapid response to limit occurrence and the ability to spread	The Nature Conservancy	DCR liaison-DCR ecologist DCR Regional Director Appalachian Trail Council Trustees of Reservations	2006 & annually	**Personnel** *Lead* (to be determined*)*: apply monitoring and control methods *DCR liaison*: contribute ideas, review draft protocol, coordinate DCR internal review (4 days) *Volunteer scientist, ATC, TOR:* annual monitoring: (one day) **Cost:** DCR staff: normal working hours (operating account); scientists-volunteer
LICHEN / FUNGI				
Continue lichen field study to expand on current knowledge and to better understand habitat considerations that sustain populations	Mount Everett Coalition	DCR liaison: DCR ecologist DCR Regional Director Volunteer lichenologist	ongoing	**Personnel** *Lead*: (to be determined) provide inspiration, funding and oversight of summit research (ongoing) *Volunteer lichenologist:* field work, report preparation and publication *DCR ecologist*: DCR linkage and peer review (15 hours per study) **Cost:** DCR staff-normal working hours (operating account); scientist-private funding/volunteers

Project	Lead	Collaborators	Timeframe	Estimate of Resources Needed
LICHEN / FUNGI (continued)				
Place signs at appropriate locations to direct hikers to stay on the authorized trails	Regional trails coordinator	DCR regional sign maker DCR Regional Director ATC	2006	**Personnel** *Lead*: (to be determined) design and determine placement of signs (4 hours) *DCR sign maker*: build & erect signs (7 hours) *ATC:* review sign design (2 hours) **Cost**: DCR staff-normal work hours (operating account); ATC staff-normal working hours, materials
Monitor lichen community of the summit	Volunteer lichenologist	DCR liaison: DCR ecologist DCR Regional Director	2005 & annually	**Personnel** *Lead* (to be determined*)*: conceptualize and design monitoring protocol (1 day) and undertake annual monitoring (1 day) *DCR ecologist*: DCR linkage and draft protocol review (1 day) **Cost**: DCR staff-normal working hours (operating account); lichenologist-private funding/volunteer
BIRDS				
Develop an avian monitoring, breeding bird survey and raptor migration count program	to be determined	DCR liaison: DCR ecologist DCR Regional Director Mass Wildlife Berkshire District MAS	2005-2006	**Personnel** *Lead*: (to be determined) adapt existing protocols to Mount Everett summit habitats (5 days) *DCR ecologist*: provide DCR linkage, input to and review of protocol adapted to Mount Everett summit. (1 day) *Mass Wildlife, MAS & summit scientists*: review and comment on draft protocols: (½ day) **Cost**: DCR staff-normal working hours (operating account); scientists -volunteers

Project	Lead	Collaborators	Timeframe	Estimate of Resources Needed
BIRDS (continued)				
Continue to implement an avian monitoring and breeding bird survey and institute a raptor migration count program and prepare annual report	to be determined	DCR liaison: DCR ecologist DCR Regional Director MAS Berkshire Bird Club	2005 and then annually	**Personnel** *Lead* (to be determined) continue to organize/conduct annual avian monitoring and breeding bird surveys and prepare annual report(4 days) *scientists*: assist in monitoring and survey and report preparation (5 days) *DCR ecologist*: provide DCR linkage, monitoring & survey assistance and review draft report (3 days) MAS: monitoring & survey assist. & draft report review (2 days) DCR-GIS: GPS survey points & locate points on a map (3 days) **Cost**: DCR staff-normal work hours (operating account); MAS staff-normal working hours; scientists -volunteers
MOTHS				
Continue Lepidoptera survey to address seasonal species and suitable habitat and hosts,	Mount Everett Coalition	DCR liaison: DCR ecologist DCR Regional Director NHESP Volunteer lepidopteron scientist Lloyd Center	2005-2008	**Personnel** *Lead*: (to be determined)provide inspiration, funding and oversight of summit research (ongoing) *DCR ecologist*: DCR linkage and report peer review (1 day) *Lepidopteron scientist*: conduct survey and prepare report (10 days per year) **Cost:** DCR staff-normal working hours (operating account); scientists-private funding or volunteer

Project	Lead	Collaborators	Timeframe	Estimate of Resources Needed
RECREATION / ACCESS / PUBLIC SAFETY				
Repair road erosion and replace culverts	DCR regional engineer	Private contractor DCR Regional Director DCR Ecologist DCR regional trails Coordinator NHESP	2005	**Personnel** *Lead (DCR regional engineer*): project design & project management (5 days) *DCR ecologist, regional trails coordinator & NHESP*: rare plants identification (1day) **Cost:** DCR staff-normal working hours (operating account); engineering design, permitting and construction contract: $50,000 (capital account)
Install gate at Guilder Pond parking area	DCR regional engineer	Private contractor DCR Mount Washington supervisor	2005-2006	**Personnel** *Lead (DCR regional engineer):* design, procurement and installation of the gate (5 days) **Cost:** DCR staff-normal working hours (operating account); materials: $5,000 (capital account)
Post signs at parking areas on allowable and prescribed public activities	DCR Mount Washington Supervisor	DCR Office of Communications DCR Regional Director ACEC director Regional trails coordinator DCR ecologist	2006	**Personnel** *Lead (Mount Washington Supervisor*): oversee design and posting of the signs (2 days) *DCR Office of Communications:* prepare signs (1 day) *ACEC director, regional trails* *Coordinator, DCR ecologist*: provide content for signs (1/2 day each). **Cost**: DCR staff-normal working hours (operating account); sign material $25

Project	Lead	Collaborators	Timeframe	Estimate of Resources Needed
RECREATION / ACCESS / PUBLIC SAFETY (continued)				
Coordinate with public safety agencies to update emergency response procedures for injured hikers and fire suppression protocols.	DCR Mount Washington Supervisor	DCR Regional trails coordinator DCR Regional Director Mount Washington Board of Selectmen Adjoining town forest fire wardens and fire & police departments.	2006	**Personnel** *Lead (DCR Mount Washington supervisor*): coordinate the update of the procedures (4 days) *Other collaborators*: provide input, review draft update and approve final update (1/2 day each). **Cost**: DCR Mount Washington supervisor-seasonal account; other coordinators -normal working hours
Monitor visitor activities in the reservation,	DCR Mount Washington supervisor	DCR Regional Director DCR ridge runner DCR regional trails Coordinator	Summer 2005 onward	**Personnel** *Lead (DCR Mount Washington Supervisor*): open & close gates (1 hour plus per day): monitor activities in the reservation)1 hour per day *DCR regional trails coordinator*: monitor trail and camping activities (as needed) *DCR ridge runner* (approximately 1 day per week-AT trail only) **Cost**: DCR Mount Washington Supervisor- summer seasonal account; DCR staff-normal working hours (operating account); ATC ridge runner-normal working hours
APPALACHIAN TRAIL / SCENIC VIEWS				
Continue AT trail monitoring to ensure hiker safety, resource protection and compliance with Plan's goal & objectives	DCR regional trails coordinator	DCR Mount Washington Supervisor DCR Regional Director ATC DCR ridge runner ATC and AMC volunteers	2005 & future years	**Personnel** *Lead (DCR regional trails coordinator*): maintain coordination with ATC and AMC *DCR Mount Washington Supervisor*: Trail monitoring, emergency hiker rescue, trail management (5 days) *ATC*: AT trail policy and funding *ATC ridge runners*: provide hiker safety and oversight services (summer months-on summit ½ day per week) *ATC and AMC volunteers*: trail maintenance work (several days per year); hiker rescue, as needed (5 days per year) **Cost**: DCR regional trails coordinator- normal working hours

Project	Lead	Collaborators	Timeframe	Estimate of Resources Needed
RECREATION / ACCESS / PUBLIC SAFETY (continued)				
				(operating account); DCR Mount Washington supervisor-seasonal staff account; ATC-normal working hours; ATC and AMC volunteers- volunteer.
Apply AT blazes on summit consistent with ATC policy	DCR regional trails coordinator	DCR Mount Washington Supervisor	2005-2006	**Personnel** *Lead (DCR regional trails coordinator*): undertake work (1 day) *DCR MOUNT Washington Supervisor*: Coordination (1/2 day) **Cost:** DCR permanent staff-normal working hours (operation budget); DCR Mount Washington Supervisor: seasonal budget
Remove spray paint from old fire tower pedestals	DCR Mount Washington Supervisor		2005	**Personnel** *Lead (DCR Mount Washington Supervisor)*: undertake work (1/2 day) **Cost**: DCR Mount Washington Supervisor (Seasonal staff budget)
Coordinate any proposed future management activities on the AT with the ATC and AMC	DCR western regional director	DCR regional trails coordinator DCR Regional Director ATC, AMC	as needed	**Personnel** *Lead (DCR western regional director*): maintain liaison with the ATC and the AMC (1 day) *DCR regional trails coordinator*: assist in coordination activities (2 days) **Cost:** DCR staff-normal working hours (operating account)

Project	Lead	Collaborators	Timeframe	Estimate of Resources Needed
APPALACHIAN TRAIL / SCENIC VIEWS (continued)				
Provide access to prime scenic overlook area via existing access points trail and small directional signs	DCR regional trails coordinator	DCR Mount Washington supervisor DCR Regional Director Friends of Mount Everett Reservation ATC & AMC volunteers	2005 and as needed	**Personnel** *Lead (DCR regional trails coordinator*): oversee work (as needed-1 day per year) *DCR Mount Washington supervisor*: coordination as needed (1 day per year) *Volunteers*: assist in the work (as needed) **Cost**: DCR regional trails coordinator-normal working hours (operating account); DCR Mount Washington Supervisor-seasonal budget volunteers-voluntary
VISITOR STEWARDSHIP				
Produce interpretative signs/material on the unique ecology of the summit and the role of public in protecting this environment. Work with area schools to incorporate summit studies into school science curriculum	DCR Ecologist with DCR Office of Communications	DCR liaison: DCR-Ecologist DCR Regional Director DCR interpretative services and graphics ATC, NHESP Friends of Mount Everett	2006	**Personnel** *Lead Person (DCR Ecologist:* conceptualize an interpretative program, recruit scientist for content and designers for design, prepare draft signs/material, get necessary approvals, find funding and prepare signs/material. (4 weeks) *Volunteer scientist*: content (1 week) *Volunteer Designer*: 2 weeks *DCR liaison*: provide DCR linkage , program and design review and approval (4 days) *ATC,NHESP, Friends of Mount Everett:* content review and input (1 day each) **Cost:** DCR staff –normal working hours(operating account); scientists –volunteer; sign production & installation: DCR & or private; material printing: DCR & or private funding

7.0 INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED DURING DEVELOPMENT OF THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

CONTACT NAME	AFFILIATION
Ken Kimball	AMC Pinkham Notch
J.T. Horn	Appalachian Trail Conference
Paul Somers	NHESP State Botanist
Glenn Motzkin	Harvard Forest
Bob Leverett	Old Growth expert
Sergio Harding	Previous NHESP Data Manager
Cara Lee	NY Shawangunk Ridge TNC
Tim Abbot	MA Berkshires TNC
Tom Wessels	Antioch NE Graduate School
Bill Carpenter	NH Forest & Parks
Bob Hardy	NH Regional Forester
Lionel Chute	NH Natural Heritage
Eleanor Tillinghast	Green Berkshires, Inc./Town Board
Pat Swain	NHESP Ecologist
Susan Daniels	Appalachian Trail Conference
Dave Orwig	Harvard Forest
Nick Thielker	Friends of Mount Everett
Cosmo Catalano	MA Appalachian Trail Committee, Berkshire Chapter
Richard Jarvis	Adirondack Park Agency
Raymond Curran	Adirondack Park Agency
David Wagner	University of Connecticut
Rick Van de Poll, Ph.D.	Ecosystem Management Consultants, LLC
Joe Choniere	Massachusetts Audubon Society
Philip May	Lichenologist

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Swain, P.C. and Kearsley, J.B. 2001. Draft Classification of the Natural Communities of Massachusetts, Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, Westborough, MA.

Tillinghast, E. 1999. A Brief History of the Mount Everett Summit and Comparison with Other South Taconic Summits

Van de Poll, R., PhD. 1999. Tree-Ring Data, Species Identification, and Informal Report on Mount Everett Site Visit, Nov. 7, 1999

Wagner, D.L. 2000. The Macrolepidotera Fauna of Mount Everett, Massachusetts

Weatherbee, P.B., Childs, N. 2001. Botanical Inventory of the Summit Area of Mount Everett

http://www.lastgreatplaces.org/berkshire/history/art6523.html Literary Connections to the Berkshire Taconic Landscape

http://www.mounteverett.org/Mountwashington.html

http://www.appalachiantrail.org/hike/trail/mass_regs.html

Massachusetts Forest and Parks Regulations – 304 CMR 12.00
ACEC Regulations – 301 CMR 12.00 http://www.mass/gov/dcr/stewardship/acec
Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Regulations – 301 CMR 11.00
Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act Regulations – 310 CMR 10.00
Massachusetts Endangered Species Act Regulations – 321 CMR 10.00

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9.0 APPENDICES

Appendix A – Land Stewardship Zoning Guidelines

LAND STEWARDSHIP ZONING GUIDELINES
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION
February, 2006

Background

In July, 2003 state legislation established the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), consisting of a Division of Urban Parks and Recreation, a Division of State Parks and Recreation, and a Division of Water Supply Protection. This legislation essentially merged the former Department of Environmental Management (DEM) and the Metropolitan District Commission. In addition, the legislation required the preparation of management plans for state parks, forests and reservations under the management of DCR (Chapter 21, Section 2F). This legislation states that management plans shall include guidelines for operation and land stewardship, provide for the protection and stewardship of natural and cultural resources, and shall ensure consistency between recreation, resource protection, and sustainable forest management.

As part of addressing this legislative requirement, land stewardship zoning guidelines will be incorporated into the development and implementation of DCR Resource Management Plans. These Land Stewardship Zoning Guidelines (Guidelines) represent a revision of the previous Land Stewardship Zoning system developed by Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) agencies in the early 1990s, and which had been applied to the preparation of management plans for state parks, forests and reservations under the management of the former DEM.

The purpose of these revised Guidelines is to provide a general land stewardship zoning framework for the development of Resource Management Plans for all state reservations, parks and forests under the management of the DCR Divisions of Urban Parks and Recreation and State Parks and Recreation. The Guidelines do not apply to Division of Water Supply Protection (DWSP) properties because DWSP watershed planning has a separate legislative mandate and established planning procedures.

Overview of Guidelines

The Guidelines define three types of zones to address the legislative requirement to provide for the protection and stewardship of natural and cultural resources and to ensure consistency between recreation, resource protection, and sustainable forest management. The Guidelines are intended to provide a general land stewardship zoning framework that is flexible and that can guide the long-term management of a given DCR property or facility. The three zones may be supplemented with significant feature overlays that

identify specific designated/recognized resource features (such as Forest Reserves, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, or areas subject to historic preservation restrictions). DCR parks, forests and reservations are also subject to specific policy guidelines and/or performance standards (such as Executive Order No. 181 for Barrier Beaches) and applicable environmental laws and regulations of the Commonwealth.

Application of the three-zone system to a particular DCR park, forest or reservation is facilitated by the development and application of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology. GIS resource overlays provide a general screen whereby lands of special resource significance and sensitivity can be mapped and identified. General landscape features such as forested areas, wetlands, streams and ponds can also be mapped as part of this overlay approach. Further, additional data regarding recreational uses and developed facilities and sites can be added. This type of mapping and data collection, based on the best information currently available, provides the basis for subsequent analysis and ultimately the development and application of appropriate land stewardship zoning guidelines to a specific state park, forest or reservation.

Land Stewardship Zoning Guidelines provide a foundation for recommendations that will address resource stewardship and facility management objectives, and are intended to cover both existing DCR property or facility conditions and desired future conditions for that property or facility. Proposals for changing the Guidelines in a previously approved Resource Management Plan should be submitted to the DCR Stewardship Council for review and adoption.

Land Stewardship Zones

Zone 1

General Description

This zone includes unique, exemplary and highly sensitive resources and landscapes that require special management approaches and practices to protect and preserve the special features and values identified in the specific Resource Management Plan. Examples of these resources include rare species habitat identified by the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program as being highly sensitive to human activities, fragile archaeological sites, and unique or exemplary natural communities. Management objectives emphasize protecting these areas from potentially adverse disturbances and impacts.

General Management Guidelines

- Only dispersed, low-impact, non-motorized, sustainable recreation will be allowed provided that the activities do not threaten or impact unique and highly sensitive resources.

- Existing trails and roads will be evaluated to ensure compatibility with identified resource features and landscape, and will be discontinued if there are suitable sustainable alternatives. New trails may be constructed only after a strict evaluation of need and avoidance of any potential adverse impacts on identified resources. New roads may only be constructed to meet public health and safety needs or requirements; however, the project design and siting process must avoid any potential adverse impacts on identified resources and demonstrate that there are no other suitable alternatives.

- Vegetation or forest management will be utilized only to preserve and enhance identified resource features and landscapes.

Zone 2

General Description

This Zone includes land areas containing typical yet important natural and cultural resources on which common forestry practices and dispersed recreational activities can be practiced at sustainable levels that do not degrade these resources and that hold potential for improving their ecological health, productivity and/or protection through active management. Examples include managed woodlands with terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems characterized by a diversity of wildlife and plant habitats, rare species habitat that is compatible with sustainable forestry and dispersed recreation, agricultural resources, resilient cultural sites and landscapes, and backcountry camping areas. Zone 2 areas may be actively managed provided that the management activities are consistent with the approved Resource Management Plan for the property.

General Management Guidelines

- Management approaches and actions will address a wide range of potential recreational opportunities and settings that are consistent and compatible with natural resource conservation and management goals.

- Utilize Best Management Practices for forestry and other resource management activities to encourage native biodiversity, protect rare species habitats and landforms.

- Protect and maintain water quality by providing for healthy functioning terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems.

- Provide a safe, efficient transportation network with minimal impact on natural and cultural resources while serving public safety needs and allowing visitors to experience a variety of outdoor activities.

- New trails may be allowed dependent upon existing area trail densities, purpose and need, physical suitability of the site, and meeting guidelines for protection of rare species habitat and archaeological resources.

- Sustainable forest management activities may be undertaken following guidelines established through eco region-based assessments, district level forestry plans, current best forestry management practices, and providing for consistency with resource protection goals.

- Roads may be constructed if access for resource management or public access is needed and construction can be accomplished in an environmentally protective manner. Existing roads will be maintained in accordance with the DCR road classification system and maintenance policy.

- Additional site-specific inventory and analysis may be needed prior to any of the management activities described above to ensure that no adverse impacts occur to previously un-documented unique and sensitive resources and landscape features.

Zone 3

General Description

This zone includes constructed or developed administrative, maintenance and recreation sites, structures and resilient landscapes which accommodate concentrated use by recreational visitors and require intensive maintenance by DCR staff. Examples include park headquarters and maintenance areas, parking lots, swimming pools and skating rinks, paved bikeways, swimming beaches, campgrounds, playgrounds and athletic fields, parkways, golf courses, picnic areas and pavilions, concessions, and areas assessed to be suitable for those uses.

General Management Guidelines

- The management approach and actions will emphasize public safety conditions and provide for an overall network of accessible facilities that meets the needs of DCR visitors and staff.

- Maintenance of these facilities and associated natural and cultural resources, and new construction or development, will meet state public health code, and state building code and environmental regulations.

- Shorelines and surface waters may be used for recreation within constraints of maintaining public safety and water quality.

- Historic restoration, rehabilitation or reconstruction for interpretation or adaptive reuse of historic structures will be undertaken only in conjunction with a historic restoration plan.

- To the greatest extent possible, construction will include the use of "green design" for structures, such as use of low-flow water fixtures and other water conservation systems or techniques, solar and other renewable energy sources, and the implementation of Best Management Practices to protect the soil and water resources at all facilities.

Significant Feature Overlays

General Description

The three land stewardship zones may be supplemented with significant feature overlays that identify specific designated/recognized resource features. These significant features are generally identified through an inventory process or research, and are formally designated. The purpose of these overlays is to provide more precise management guidance for identified resources and to recognize, maintain, protect, or preserve unique and significant values, regardless of the zone in which they occur. Examples of significant feature overlays include Forest Reserves, areas subject to public drinking water regulations, or areas subject to historic preservation restrictions.

Management Guidelines

Specific management guidelines for significant features overlays are provided by resource specialists or by the federal/state/regional/local agency that has recognized and listed the resource or site.

Appendix B – Public Comments and Revisions to the Draft RMP

This appendix includes the following materials:

1) Summary of written comments received regarding the Public Review Draft, October 3, 2005, Mount Everett Summit Reservation Resource Management Plan

2) Agency response to comments

3) Summary of revisions to the Public Review Draft, October 3, 2005, Mount Everett Reservation Summit Resource Management Plan

4) List of comments received

1) Summary of written comments received regarding the Draft RMP

The Department of Conservation and Recreation received approximately 70 written comments regarding the Draft Mount Everett Reservation Summit RMP. These comments are organized into four categories and listed in the document Written Comments Received, located at the end of this appendix. The first category consists of a list of comments received from towns, state agencies, and partner and environmental organizations. The second category is a list of approximately 40 people or parties who provided written comments, almost entirely by e-mail, supporting the draft RMP, including no new construction (such as a viewing deck or platform) on the summit of Mount Everett. The third category is a list of approximately 22 people or parties who provided written comments, almost entirely by e-mail, supporting or advocating for the construction of a viewing platform or deck on the summit of Mount Everett. A fourth category is one written comment proposing a compromise solution regarding the construction of a viewing platform on the summit.

The letters received from the Mount Washington Board of Selectmen, Massachusetts Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program, Appalachian Trail Conservancy, Appalachian Mountain Club, The Nature Conservancy, Harvard Forest, Massachusetts Audubon, and Green Berkshires, Inc. consistently and strongly support the Draft RMP and its findings and recommendations. Specific suggestions regarding RMP implementation and corrections to the text are included in these letters. Many of these letters note the importance of protecting the unique ecology of the summit area and managing a balance of resource protection, hiking on the Appalachian Trail, and access to scenic views.

As stated above, the second category of comments express a clear appreciation for the Mount Everett Reservation and support for the draft RMP, and explicitly oppose new construction on the Mount Everett Summit. The category of comments expressing support

for a constructed viewing platform or deck also express a clear appreciation for the Mount Everett Reservation and the scenic views afforded from the summit.

Copies of the written comments received may be viewed by contacting the DCR Resource Management Planning Program, c/o Leslie Luchonok, at Leslie.Luchonok@state.ma.us; 136 Damon Road, Northampton, MA 01060; or 413-586-8706, ext.21.

2) Agency response to comments

Two primary questions or issues were raised in the public comments received regarding the Draft RMP. The first issue involved the written comments that advocated for the construction of a viewing deck or platform on the summit of Mount Everett. Many of these comments described the extensive scenic views that were available from the summit in the past, and proposed a viewing deck or platform because the growth of vegetation over time on the summit has obscured these views. The revised Final RMP has not changed regarding the construction of new structures on the summit, and no new construction due to the sensitivity of the habitat on the summit. DCR does propose to use a very limited number of existing outcroppings in the summit area to provide and maintain more limited scenic views.

The second major issue raised was the capacity of DCR to manage the Mount Everett Reservation and the summit area with limited staff resources, particularly once the access road from East Street to Guilder Pond was reopened. A section has been added to the Executive Summary of the revised Final Draft RMP to address this issue. This section describes two management alternatives regarding the Summit area, as well as two additional management measures or options that can be combined with those two alternatives.

3) Summary of revisions to the Draft RMP

The principal revisions to the Draft RMP incorporated into the revised Final RMP are located in the Executive Summary. Several corrections or minor edits are scattered throughout the text.

The first subsection with the heading Project Overview, Management Context, and Summary of the Planning Process includes several new paragraphs regarding the DCR Management Context for the Mount Everett summit area, the Mount Everett Reservation, and the larger DCR management unit of which it is part. The larger management unit is described, and a brief summary of management responsibilities and staffing levels is provided. A new Summary of the Planning Process is also provided in this subsection.

A sixth subsection with the heading Management Needs and Alternatives has been added to the Executive Summary. This subsection briefly reviews the current management capacity of the larger 8,600-acre management that includes the Summit area. It includes a

review of management needs and RMP recommendations, and then concludes with a description of management alternatives plus additional management measures or options.

In the Priority Action Recommendations subsection, additional text has been added to Action 7 regarding the repair and maintenance of the access road from East Street to the Guilder Pond parking area and the emergency access road to the former upper parking area. Action 8 has been added to address repairs to the roof of the stone shelter and providing and maintaining scenic views and viewing areas.

Finally, Appendix B has been added to the revised Final RMP.

4) Written Comments Received, Draft Mount Everett Reservation Summit RMP

A. Comments from Towns, State Agencies, Partner and Environmental Organizations

Eight comments received

Mount Washington Board of Selectmen, 11/14/05 letter

Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (NHESP), MA Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, Tim Simmons, 11/28/05 letter and follow-up 12/6/05 e-mail

Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC), Val Stori, 10/19/05 letter; also 11/17/05 letter to Editor, Berkshire Eagle

Appalachian Mountain Club, Heather Clish, 11/29/05 letter

The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Jason Miner, 11/30/05 letter

Harvard Forest, Glenn Motzkin and Dave Orwig, 11/29/05 letter

Massachusetts Audubon, Heidi Ricci, 11/30/05 letter

Green Berkshires, Inc., Eleanor Tillinghast, 12/28/05 letter

B. Comments from general public

B.1. Support plan without viewing deck or other constructed structures on summit

Approximately 40 comments received

Name/address	Date
Barbara Spurr Van Deusen Bulkeley, Morgan G. Bulkeley III, Morgan G. Bulkeley IV, Doris Van Deusen Southergill, Lucile Van Deusen [morganbulkeley@att.net] (Mount Washington residents)	11/21/05
Kathleen and Gary Handel [khandel1@earthlink.net] East Street, Mt. Washington, MA 01258	11/21/05

Bobbie Hallig [Bhallig@aol.com] (Mount Washington property owner)	11/21/05
Eleanor Tillinghast [eleanortillinghast@att.net] (Mount Washington resident)	11/21/05
Melinda Fine [mailto:melinda.fine@nyu.edu] 135 East Street, Mount Washington, MA 01258	11/21/05
Liz Nash [liznash@austin.rr.com] 9712 Llano Estacado Ln., Austin, Texas 78759, (512) 231-0045 (longtime family property owners in Mount Washington)	11/21/05
Barbara Greenberg [mailto:barbarag@rcn.com] (Mount Washington property owner)	11/22/05
John P. Verones, Jr. Family [mailto:jverones@simons-rock.edu] (Mount Washington residents)	11/22/05
Harriet Bergmann, Ph.D. [mailto:bergmann@bcn.net] 183 East Street, Mount Washington, MA	11/22/05
Janusz Gottwald, AIA [mailto:gaia@direcway.com] (Mount Washington resident)	11/22/05
Lelia Stokes Weinstein [mailto:lelia17@comcast.net] (Mount Washington property owner, Garrett Farms)	11/22/05
Fred & Alison Collins [mailto:fred@fredcollinsphoto.com] 220 East Street, Mount Washington, MA 01258	11/22/05
Michael Ballon [mailto:mballon@bcn.net] 229 Mount Washington Road, South Egremont, MA, 413-528-9204	11/22/05 & 10/28/05
Fran Bowman [mailto:franbowman@comcast.net] Francesca D. Bowman, Mount Washington, MA (summer resident) Tel: 413 585-9679; Fax: 413 584-0720	11/22/05
Professor Zachary Lockman [mailto:zachary.lockman@nyu.edu] Dept of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, New York University, 50 Washington Square South, New York NY 10012, telephone: (212) 998-8884 (Mount Washington property owner)	11/22/05
Suzanne and Edward Bulkeley [mailto:EdErb@aol.com] (Mount Washington property owners and residents)	11/22/05
Ray Kasevich [mailto:rkasevich@ksnenergies.com] Mount Washington, MA (property owner and resident)	11/22/05
Bob Bott [mailto:robot@bcn.net] 134 West Street, Mount Washington, MA 01258	11/22/05
Phil Zogran [mailto:stoksrch@earthlink.net] 141 East Street, Mount Washington, MA	11/22/05

Alison S. Gottlieb. PhD [mailto:Alison.Gottlieb@umb.edu] 11/22/05
Gerontology Institute, UMass Boston, 100 Morrissey Boulevard,
Boston, MA 02125, 617-287-7413
(Mount Washington property owner)

Nancy Murraybott [mailto:keewaydinhannah@earthlink.net] 11/22/05
(Mount Washington resident)

Ellie Lovejoy [mailto:edl@taconic.net] 11/23/05
Mount Washington, MA

John Alexander [mailto:johnalexmtwash@earthlink.net] 11/23/05
102 West Street, Mt. Washington, MA

Lainey Alexander [mailto:lainealex@earthlink.net] 11/24/05
(Mount Washington resident)

Oskar K Hallig [mailto:OHallig@aol.com] 11/24/05
68 West Street, Mount Washington, MA 01258

Joan Sangree [mailto:sangree@frontiernet.net] 11/26/05
East Street, Mount Washington

Judy Isacoff [mailto:naturesturn@taconic.net] 11/27/05
Nature's Turn, 173 East Street, Mount Washington, MA 01258

Rebecca Tillinghast [mailto:rebeccatill@adelphia.net] 11/27/05
(as a property owner in Mount Washington)

Duane Batista [mailto:dbatista@earthlink.net] 11/27/05
23 Plantain Pond Rd., Mount Washington, MA 01258 781-237-3569
(seasonal resident of Mount Washington)

Laura Purcell [mailto:LAURA851@aol.com] 11/28/05
86 East Street, Mount Washington, MA 01258
413.528.3492 or 914.843.9581 or 941.779.9312

Anthony Blair [mailto:blair@hannonlerner.com] 11/28/05
184 Main Street, PO Box 697, Lee, MA 01238
413-243-3311; 413-637-3311; 413-243-4919 (fax)

Conn Nugent [mailto:cnugent@jmkfund.org] 11/28/05
(property owner in Mount Washington in the process of building a small house)

Mackenzie Waggaman [mailto:mwaggaman@taconic.net] 11/28/05
173 East Street, Mount Washington, MA 01258

Rev. Philip R. Newell [mailto:pip@revprn.com] 11/28/05
(Mount Washington homeowner)

Gerry & Jolaine Allan [mailto:gallan@msn.com] 11/29/05
121 East Street, Mount Washington

Eileen Vining [vining@rcn.com] (and signed/FAXed letter) 11/30/05
PO Box 161, South Egremont, MA 01258

Ted Vining [vining@rcn.com] (and signed/FAXed letter) 11/30/05
South Egremont, MA

Bruce Detwiler and Sandy Winters [mailto:bdetw@earthlink.net] 12/1/05
(property owners in Mount Washington)

Lannie Moore [mailto:lanniemoore@hotmail.com] 12/1/05
(supports plan)

Kevin J. Kavanah [mailto:preppiper@yahoo.com] 12/5/05
82 Hollenbeck Avenue, Great Barrington, MA 01230

B.2. Support plan with viewing area

One comment received

Gail Garrett [mailto:garrett@taconic.net] 12/4/05
138 East Street, Mount Washington, MA 01258

B.3. Support plan and/or constructed viewing deck/platform on summit

21 comments received

Stephen Willig [scwillig2002@msn.com] 11/21/05
PO Box 341, South Egremont, MA 01258

Christopher Nye [cnye@orionsociety.org] 11/21/05
Sheffield, MA

Patrick Kelly [cyclamen317@yahoo.com] 11/21/05
4 High Street, Great Barrington, MA 01230

Anne Oppermann [parkanne@taconic.net] 11/21/05
135 Taconic Avenue, Great Barrington, MA 01230

Alexander R. Thorp [mailto:bigal@bcn.net] 11/22/05
Indian Line Farm, 57 Jug End Road, Great Barrington, MA 01230,
(413) 528-8301

Karin Joy Passmore [mailto:passmore@bcn.net] 11/23/05
P.O. Box 244, Housatonic, MA 01236

Ruth Wheeler [mailto:MeanWheels@aol.com] 11/23/05
Lenox, MA

Philip C. Garrett 11/23/05
Resident, Town of Mount Washington, Ma.
(Letter sent as attachment to e-mail from JudyWhitbeck@msn.com)

Paul E. Decker 11/28/05
11 West View Road, South Egremont, MA 01258

Nick Thielker [mailto:nickthielker@yahoo.com] 11/28/05
Friends of Mount Everett, PO Box 724, Great Barrington, MA 01230
413-528-0959

Jennifer Sahn [sahn@orionsociety.org] 11/27/05
South Egremont, MA

Don & Suzanne Garrett [mailto:Dongarrett@aol.com] 11/28/05
(as landowners)

Sabina Curti [mailto:curti@taconic.net] 11/29/05
Hillsdale NY

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