

TRAIL SYSTEM PLAN

DCR's Pittsfield and October Mountain State Forests



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Maps (available at): <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dcr/services-and-assistance/grants-and-technical-assistance/trails-system-planning.html>



Felton Bridge (Photo, DCR Files)

Section 1. Introduction

1.1. Introduction

This Trail System Plan for Pittsfield and October Mountain State Forest has been completed as a component of and appendix to the Pittsfield Complex Resource Management Plan (RMP). The RMP provides an inventory and assessment of the environmental, cultural, and recreation resources; identifies current management practices and capabilities; and develops specific, implementable management recommendations to address the highest priority needs within the Pittsfield Management Complex. The Trail Plan builds upon the RMP providing specific analysis, discussion and both short and long-term recommendations aimed at:

- Enhancing recreational experiences for approved recreational uses
- Protecting the priority natural and cultural values and resources at the forest
- Ensuring access for desired and managed activities while limiting access for unauthorized purposes
- Providing opportunities for public and stakeholder stewardship of these recreational, natural and cultural resources

1.2. Mission of the Department of Conservation and Recreation

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) is responsible for the stewardship of approximately 450,000 acres of Massachusetts' forests, parks, reservations, greenways, historic sites and landscapes, seashores, lakes, ponds, reservoirs, and watersheds. It is one of the largest state parks systems in the country. The mission of the DCR is:

To protect, promote, and enhance our common wealth of natural, cultural, and recreational resources.

1.3. Trail System Planning

Trails are more than just paths in the woods, or routes that connect one place to another. Trails create recreational experiences for users that are formed by a series of connected physical, sensory (i.e. visual and auditory) and emotional events. Trails are also the venue through which we experience, discover and interact with the natural and cultural environment around us. In many ways, trails are the perfect intersection of Conservation and Recreation.

Trails and trail networks can also provide vital emergency and forest management access pathways for public safety, search and rescue, fire control, wildlife management, research and forest management. Concurrently, they may provide undesirable access for unauthorized or illegal uses.

Trail Systems are more than just the sum of the individual trails of which they are composed. Successful Trail Systems work seamlessly to highlight scenic and cultural features, protect sensitive resources, create valuable connections, provide for public safety, discourage unwanted behaviors and provide the desired range of high-quality recreational experiences to users.

The Trails Plan is intended to be a working document for setting priorities; allocating resources; engaging stakeholders; guiding volunteer efforts; and adapting to changing fiscal, social and environmental conditions. The planning process provides a forum for communication and cooperation with stakeholders in DCR's stewardship efforts.

1.4. The Planning Process

The development of the Pittsfield (PSF) and October Mountain (OMSF) Trail System Plan follows the basic process outlined in DCR's

Trails Guidelines and Best Practices Manual (revised 2014). This process includes the following steps:

1. Get to Know the Trails
2. Identify Scenic, Recreational and Cultural Destinations, Features and Experiences
3. Identify Constraints, Issues and Problem Areas
4. Make Recommendations

As a part of this planning process, DCR completed and updated its Road and Trail Inventory for both state forests. This inventory allows us to integrate critical natural and cultural resource information with road and trail data.

DCR staff engaged and consulted with key stakeholders organized through a "Trails Stakeholder Advisory Team", solicited public input through two participatory public workshops, and consulted with neighboring conservation land owners and sister agencies. The notes from these workshops are included in Appendix A.

***The trail experience
is formed by a series
of connected
physical, emotional
and sensory events.***



A draft Trail System Plan was prepared and distributed within the DCR to the Operations, Recreation, and Planning, Design and Resource Protection staff for internal review. A revised

draft was produced for public review and comment.

The draft has been made available to the public through the DCR web page in the summer of 2016. The final plan will be posted on the DCR web page in fall of 2016.

DRAFT



Pittsfield's Tranquility Trail (Photo by Paul Jahnige)

Section 2. Existing Conditions

2.1 Natural and Cultural Resource

The natural resource existing conditions for the PSF and OMSF will be described in the RMP Section 2.1. The RMP discusses climate, geology, natural history, water resources, vegetation and wildlife.

We highlight the primary natural and cultural resource values at Pittsfield that deserve special attention and protection. These include:

- Historic Shaker sites
- Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) era buildings and features, including parkways and backcountry ski trails
- Vernal Pools and associated upland habitat, especially those supporting rare species that may be susceptible to recreational uses and management activities
- Forest soils, especially on steep slopes and near streams and wetlands

- Large forest blocks and associated wildlife habitat managed as Woodlands

Secondary resource values include the stream and other wetland resources that flow through the forest and the many opportunities for scenic views and vistas including the azalea field and the Berry overlook.

At October Mountain, we highlight the primary resource values of:

- Public water supplies, protection zones and associated streams and wetlands
- Values of the Forest Reserve (northwestern third of the forest, values include wilderness recreation, spiritual values, biodiversity, soil formation and carbon sequestration)
- Large forest blocks and associated wildlife habitat managed as Woodlands
- The Appalachian Trail Corridor
- Endangered Species, especially salamanders, that might be negatively impacted by wheeled recreation, and breeding birds that might be disturbed by any recreation, including non-motorized recreation

Secondary resource values include forest soils, especially on steep slopes and near streams and wetlands, wildlife and wildlife habitat, forest history and historical artifacts, and opportunities for scenic views and vistas.

2.2 Recreational Resources

The RMP Section 2.3 will document the primary recreational uses and resources at Pittsfield and October Mountain State Forest.

The primary recreational activities enjoyed by the public are quite similar for both of these state forests and include:

- Camping
- Picnicking
- Hiking / Walking
- Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Riding

- Snowmobiling
- Cross-Country Skiing / Snowshoeing
- Mountain Bike Riding
- Nature Study
- Dog Walking
- Hunting
- Birding
- Boating/fishing (OMSF)

As two of only three parks in Massachusetts that allow four-wheeled OHV riding, these two forests provide an important recreational opportunity for this user group.

Pittsfield State Forest is particularly popular with mountain bikers and provides a diversity of types of legal trails used by these users. Unauthorized trail building and riding is also prevalent at this forest. October Mountain is growing in popularity for both legal and illegal riding.

Pittsfield's trail system was also developed for backcountry skiing by the CCCs, and this recreational activity appears to be regaining some popularity at Pittsfield.

The Appalachian Trail and the Taconic Crest Trail provide users with opportunities for long-distance and multi-day hiking. The management of the Appalachian Trail is guided by a multi-party MOU with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy.

2.3 Pittsfield State Forest Trail System

Pittsfield State Forest (PSF) contains over 10,000 acres of woodland spanning and encompassing the Taconic Range from Route 20 to Jiminy Peak. The slopes of the forest rise from approximately 1,100 feet near the headquarters to over 2,300 feet on the Honwee Ridge.

The north-south running Taconic Skyline Trail (motorized) and, to a lesser degree the long-

distance Taconic Crest Trail (non-motorized), form the backbone of the trail system at Pittsfield. Connected to these are various loops and connecting trails that link the forest's parking areas, access points and lowlands to the ridgeline and summits.

To a large extent, the PSF trail system has two separate but connected and sometimes overlapping trail networks. The motorized trail network is approximately 27 miles, although some is currently closed due to resource damage and maintenance issues, and links parking areas at Balance Rock, Potter Mountain Road and Berry Pond Campground to various loops and the Skyline Trail. A separate multi-use non-motorized trail network (approximately 66 miles) provides a variety of distances, types and difficulties of trail experiences that appeal to different users including most prominently hikers, mountain bikers and skiers.

In partnership with the Hancock Shaker Village, DCR has developed a trail guide to historic Shaker Village sites including the North Family Settlement, Shaker Mountain and Holy Mountain. This guide is available on-line at <http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dcr/parks/trails/shaker.pdf> and provides interesting interpretive experience that highlights cultural features in the southern part of the forest.

The state forest has an average trail density (legal trails) of 5.6 miles / square miles. Trails are spread out, more or less, uniformly throughout the forest with slightly higher densities near the headquarters and Berry Pond Circuit Road. This density is firmly in the middle of DCR's low to moderate target trail density for woodlands.

Towns Roads

Although gated at both ends, Potter Mountain Road is a town-owned road by Lanesboro and Hancock. As such, the towns have primary maintenance responsibility for this road. DCR

does not have the authority to open, close, or maintain this road without the towns' consent. Legally, DCR cannot allow OHV traffic on any town-owned public way, without changes to Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 90b.

There are other town roads that end at or near the DCR boundaries including West Street, Tower Mountain Road, Lebanon Springs Road, and Brickyard Road in New York.

Illegal Trails

Many parts of the State Forest – most notably the Balance Rock area, Silver Street area and northeast of the headquarters – are riddled with unauthorized, user-created, illegal trails. In Pittsfield, these trails have been created primarily by mountain bikers through intentional illegal trail construction. The exception to this is illegal motorized riding along the utility corridor at the northern edge of the forest. In total, DCR has inventoried 33.2 miles of illegal trails at PSF. Many of these illegal trails also cross back and forth between DCR lands and adjacent private land without owner consent.

Illegal trail construction and riding on illegal trails leads to the vegetation destruction, soil compaction, soil erosion, fragmentation, extended wildlife disturbance, and potentially, damage to wetland and below-ground archaeological resources. This also creates and reinforces a culture of non-compliance with rules and regulations which is detrimental to management of the state forest.



(Illegal Trails at Balance Rock and Silver Street)

Trail Conditions

In 2009, DCR completed a full GPS/GIS inventory of all roads and trails at PSF. This inventory has been updated in 2014-15 through this planning process and with the assistance of a Trails Stakeholders Advisory Group.

The inventory catalogues:

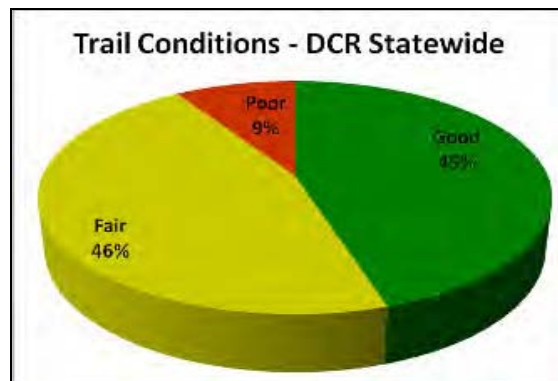
- 127 total miles of trails
- 93.7 miles of legal, authorized trails
- 44 miles of narrow 0'-3' trails
- 22 miles of 3'-5' trails
- 27 miles of wider trails / forest roads
- 46% were assessed in "Good" condition
- 38% in "Fair" condition
- 16% in "Poor" condition

Trails assessed in "Good" condition generally meet trail design parameters for their intended use and type; have a generally stable tread that can shed water; and require no or only limited immediate maintenance.

On the other hand, trails assessed in "Poor" condition do not meet the design parameters and thus function poorly for intended uses; require immediate maintenance to function fully and address conditions such as mud, erosion, obstructions or washouts; and show signs of on-going degradation that affect the trail experience.

In particular, many segments of the OHV trails are in poor condition and show signs of channelization, on-going erosion, and have many areas of mud.

Overall, with 16% of the trails in "Poor" condition PSF has a significantly higher percentage of poor condition trails than the statewide average.



Recreational Conflict

There appears to be little recreational conflict at PSF. However, there may be potential for some conflict between legal and illegal trail uses, and between motorized and non-motorized users. Appendix A provides an overview of strategies for addressing user conflict on recreational trails.

Trail Use

As a part of the planning process, DCR installed infrared trail counters at selected trailhead locations.

We documented an average daily use at the Tranquility trailhead (likely the most popular trailhead) of 45 passes per day. At this location there are spikes in weekday use around 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. On weekends, a much greater percentage of users are coming in the middle of the day (2-4 p.m.). Not surprisingly, Saturday and Sunday are the most heavily used days.

Trailhead	Season	Daily Ave	Monthly Ave	Max Daily
Skyline Trail	Summer 2012	9	232	54
Tranquility	Summer 2012	45	1,165	175
Bear Claw	Summer 2013	11	257	65

Table 2.1: Trailhead counts, Pittsfield State Forest

Other trailheads monitored exhibited around 10 average passes per day. Use on the Taconic Skyline Trail was heaviest mid-day on Saturday and Sunday. Use on the Bearclaw or Family Trails was heaviest on Monday and Wednesday evenings.

While these trail counters do not record the type of use, staff report that the Tranquility Trail is used primarily by pedestrians, the Taconic Skyline by OHV riders, and the Family Trails by mountain bikers and pedestrians.

User Input and Desires

During this planning process, DCR held a trail planning public workshop for stakeholders of PSF. This workshop allowed users to work in small groups to mark up maps, and offer recommendations. The full notes are included in Appendix D. However, multiple groups noted the following recommendations:

- Improve trailhead and intersection signage
- Improve trail map
- Improve parking and access at West St
- Open gates for hunting season
- Create new parking and OHV access at Route 20
- Make it easier for the public to volunteer
- Authorize / keep trails that are in good condition, especially single-track trails
- Improve / re-open views and vistas

In addition, DCR solicited and considered all public comments submitted via mail and email.

2.4 October Mountain State Forest Trail System

October Mountain is the largest state forest in Massachusetts totaling over 16,500 acres. The western edge of the forest rises steeply from the Housatonic River at about 980 feet to the Berkshire Plateau between 1,800 and 2,200 feet. The top of the forest is characterized by numerous streams, wetlands and reservoirs. The soils of the forest are a mix of mostly well-drained soils, but nearly all of the soils in the forest pose some limitation on trail development, either due to steep slopes, numerous large stones or wetness.

The October Mountain State Forest (OMSF) trail system contains 107.8 miles of forest road and trail, including 90.6 miles that are legal trails currently authorized by DCR. Several municipally owned public roads (some in poor condition) bisect the forest and the trail system. The trail system includes 36.8 miles that are currently designated to allow OHV use. The long-distance, Appalachian National Scenic Trail traverses the forest from south to north, and includes one overnight shelter.

Overall, the OMSF trail system includes a number of loops and spurs that connect to various trailheads, parking areas and public roads. This poses a challenge for the OHV trail system since many of the trails designated for this use are intersected by or end at public roads, where users are not allowed by law to ride.

Average trail density at OMSF (legal trails) is 3.5 miles / square mile which is within DCR's target range for the Reserve / Woodland designation of the property.

Towns Roads

As noted, October Mountain State Forest is bisected by numerous town-owned roads. As such, the towns have primary maintenance responsibility for these roads. DCR does not

have the authority to open, close or maintain these roads without the towns' consent. Legally, DCR cannot allow OHV traffic on any town-owned public way, without changes to Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 90b.

Town-owned roads include:

Town of Washington

- Ashley Lake Road
- Ashley Tail
- County Road
- Lenox-Whitney Place Road
- New Lennox Road
- Stanley Road
- Washington Mountain Road
- Watson Road
- West Branch Road

Town of Becket

- Becket Road
- Cordonier Road (partial)
- County Road
- Stanley Road

Town of Lee

- Roaring Brook Road
- Washington Mountain Road

Town of Lenox

- Roaring Brook Road
- New Lenox Road

In addition to these town-owned roads, OHV use is restricted from the berms, dikes and access roads around the October Mountain and Schoolhouse Reservoirs and Washington Mountain Marsh.

Illegal Trails

OMSF has a number of segments of user-created, illegal trails. These have been created by a mix of pedestrians, OHV riders and mountain bikers. There is a particularly dense network of mountain bike trails both on and off DCR property north of New Lenox Road. Not

all of these trails have been GPSed for inclusion in DCR's trail inventory at this time.

Trail Conditions

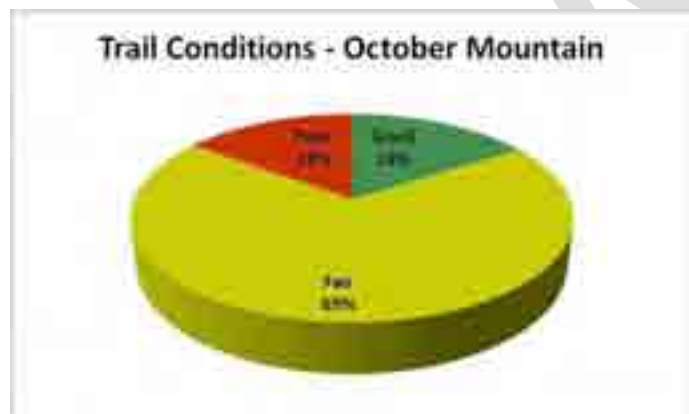
DCR completed its road and trail inventory for October Mountain State Forest in 2006/2007 and has been updating trail condition assessments attributes as a part of this planning process.

Our inventory catalogues:

- Only 3.1 miles of 0'-3' narrow trails
- 18.1 miles of 3' to 5' trails
- 72.2 miles of 5' to 10' trails
- 14.5 miles of wider forest roads

Of the trails at October Mountain:

- 16% are in "Good" condition
- 69% are in "Fair" condition
- 15% are in "Poor" condition



Trail Use and Recreational Conflict

The trail system at OMSF is enjoyed by a variety of users from hikers and hunters to snowmobilers and OHV riders. Many sections of the forest, most notably the Washington Mountain Marsh trail is important for wildlife observation and bird watching. In general, use levels at October Mountain are relatively low in comparison to many other state park and forest trail systems. This is in part due to the size and remoteness of the forest, and the somewhat difficult access from the more populated Housatonic River valley side of the forest.

DCR's OHV permitting program documented a total number of OHV riders at October Mountain as 345 for the 2012 season and 269 for the 2013 season.



In general, there appears to be little recreational conflict on the trails at OMSF. However, there is some evidence of conflict between adjacent property owners and illegal motorized access, and there may be potential for some conflict between legal and illegal trail uses, and between motorized and non-motorized trail users. Appendix A provides an overview of strategies for addressing user conflict on recreational trails should these become an issue.

User Input and Desires

During this planning process, DCR held a trail planning public workshop for stakeholders of OMSF. This workshop allowed users to work in small groups to mark up maps and offer recommendations. The full notes are included in Appendix E. However, multiple groups noted the following recommendations:

- Fix Schermerhorn Road
- Improve Signage
- Improve Map
- Create loop opportunities for both motorized and non-motorized users
- Increase / enhance parking
- Make use of volunteers

In addition, DCR solicited and considered all public comments submitted via mail and email.



OHVs at Felton Pond, October Mountain State Forest (Photo, DCR Files)

Section 3. Management Goals, Features, Experiences and Expectations

3.1 Trail System Management Goals

The trail systems at Pittsfield and October Mountain State Forest should be managed to help DCR achieve four broad goals:

- Provide the public with opportunities to experience, appreciate and interact with the park's special natural and cultural resources
- Provide for a range of motorized and non-motorized recreational and physical activities within a natural setting
- Protect and steward our common wealth of natural and cultural resources, especially rare and sensitive resource
- Provide opportunities for all users and stakeholders to connect through the stewardship of the park's special natural, cultural and recreational assets

To achieve these goals, a successful trail system should effectively:

- Highlight and connect natural, scenic, and cultural features and access points

- within the forest through a coordinated network of connecting and loop trails
- Provide a variety of “primary managed” recreational experiences to users
- Provide for forest management access

It should achieve these while simultaneously:

- Avoiding sensitive natural and cultural resources
- Meeting the expectations of users
- Minimizing ecological impacts
- Minimizing maintenance costs and management requirements

3.2 Features, Access Points and Connections

Pittsfield State Forest

Pittsfield’s most prominent features are the steep slopes, woodlands, stream valleys, wetlands and ridge top on the Taconic Range. Together these features provide opportunities for a variety of recreational users to experience nature, observe wildlife, find solitude and get moderate to strenuous physical exercise.

Specific notable features include:

- Cranberry Pond
- Twin Pond
- Shaker Historic Sites
- Summits – Pine Mountain, Tower Mountain, etc.
- Taconic ridgeline
- Open Marshes and Swamps
- Brooks – Shaker Brook, Parker Brook, Daniels Brook, etc.
- The Azalea Field
- Berry Pond
- Berry Pond Campground
- Parker Brook Campground
- CCC Ski Lodge

- Lulu Cascade
- Balance Rock
- Caves, Whirlpools and Disappearing Streams

Primary official access and parking points include:

- Route 20
- CCC Ski Lodge
- Headquarters
- Lulu Brook Parking
- Berry Pond
- Potter Mountain Road
- Balance Rock
- Brickyard Road (NY)

October Mountain State Forest

OMSF rises steeply from the Housatonic Valley to the Berkshire Plateau. The forest trail system features diverse woodlands, wetlands, water bodies and boulders. Like at PSF, the trails and terrain of October Mountain offer users a wide variety of opportunities to experience nature, observe wildlife, find solitude and get moderate to strenuous physical exercise.

Specific notable features connected by the trail system include:

- October Mountain Reservoir
- Washington Mountain Marsh
- Marsh Interpretive Trail
- Buckley Dunton Lake
- Finerty Pond
- Felton Pond
- Shermerhorn Gorge
- Roaring Brook
- Housatonic River
- Appalachian Trail
- OMSF Campground

Primary access and parking points include:

- Campground Trailhead
- Felton Pond, Shermerhorn Road

- Spruce Trailhead, Shermerhorn Road
- Finerty Trailhead, Becket Road
- Finerty Pond Road Trailhead, County Road
- AT Trailhead, Pittsfield Road
- AT Trailhead, County Road
- AT Trailhead, Jacobs Ladder Trail (Route 20)
- October Mountain Reservoir Day Use
- Watson Road Parking Area
- Buckley Dunton Boat Launch / Trailhead

3.3 Recreational Experiences and Expectations

The DCR desires to manage the both Pittsfield and October Mountain in a way that provides a range of users, both motorized and non-motorized, with a range of allowed recreational experiences. We seek to provide these experiences while simultaneously protecting the sensitive natural and cultural resources of the forest.

At Pittsfield State Forest:

DCR has identified the following trail-based “primary managed experiences” (those approved uses for which we actively seek to manage). These include:

- Hiking (and other pedestrian recreational experiences) on a variety of types of trails at varying distances.
- Mountain Biking on a connected stacked-loop network of woodland trails of varying difficulties.
- Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) riding on a connected network of woodland trails.
- Snowmobiling on a network of both connector and loop trails.
- Hunting.
- Back-Country Skiing.

- Stewarding and improving the trails and environment of PSF.

At October Mountain State Forest:

DCR has identified the following trail-based “primary managed experiences” (those approved uses for which we actively seek to manage). These include:

- Hiking (and other pedestrian recreational experiences) on a variety of types of trails at varying distances.
- Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Riding on a connected stacked-loop trail network.
- Snowmobiling on a network of both connector and loop trails.
- Mountain Biking on a connected network of woodland trails.
- Stewarding and improving the trails and environment of OMSF.

Although they may not be “primary managed experiences” at this time, DCR also recognizes that there may be some demand for and a benefit to allowing recreating with dogs on trails.

The following section provides additional details, discussion and reasonable expectations regarding the above “managed experiences.”

Hiking (and other pedestrian recreational experiences) on a variety of types of trails at varying distances:

Experiencing the natural environment on foot is the slowest and perhaps simplest mode of travel. One can stroll leisurely, observing the world around you or engaging in deep conversation with a friend; families can take the time for discovery as they hike; or one can hike, run or ski at a strenuous pace, raising the heart rate, sweating on the hills and feeling the rush of both accomplishment and exercise.

Some pedestrian trail users desire wide, relatively short to moderate distances (1 to 4 miles) that they can travel without too much

challenge. Some users will also desire a fully or mostly accessible trail surface that is firm and stable without obstructions. On the other hand, some pedestrian users desire challenging trails that offer variable terrain, provide access to more remote areas, are longer (up to 8-10 miles), and might even require some way finding skills. OMSF also includes a segment of one the nation's premiere hiking trails, the Appalachian Trail.

The pedestrian trail experience at PSF and OMSF will be **enhanced by** trails that:

- Are the right distance, accessibility and level of challenge for the individual
- Bring the user through a diversity of landscapes and habitats
- Connect access points, features and destinations in the forest
- Are well marked and signed
- Provide various loop options

The pedestrian trail experience at PSF and OMSF can be **diminished by**:

- Encountering damaged, illegal or eroded trails
- The presence of trash or dumping
- Encountering illegal motorized vehicles or aggressive off-leash dogs
- Situations that are confusing
- Getting lost

Mountain Biking on a connected stacked-loop network of woodland trails of varying difficulties:

PSF has an active and vocal community of people who enjoy mountain biking. Many individuals also ride at OMSF. Mountain bikers generally desire a variety of difficulties, distances and terrains. Most mountain bikers prefer narrower "single track" trails that meander through the forest and provide 10-20 miles of different loops.

The mountain biking experience is **enhanced by** trails that:

- Provide a variety of difficulties, distances and terrains
- Offer loop opportunities
- Connect to mostly single-track trails
- Provide sufficient mileage

The biking experiences at the forest can be **diminished by**:

- Limited mileage
- Poorly maintained or damaged trails
- Lack of signage / confusing trail networks

Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) riding on a connected network of woodland trails.

PSF and OMSF are two of only eight state forests in Massachusetts that allow legal motorized, trail-based OHV recreation, and two of only three that allow four-wheeled ATVs and UTVs.

OHVs provide users with opportunities to experience the diverse woodlands and habitats of these state forests, travel longer distances and at faster speeds than many other modes of recreation, and take on the technical challenges of trail riding. OHVs also provide important opportunities for users with limited mobility to experience the unique natural and cultural resources that these state forests have to offer.

Most OHV riders prefer narrow trails of diverse difficulty that connect features, views and loops, and provide up to 30 miles of riding.

The OHV riding experience is **enhanced by** trails that:

- Provide a variety of difficulties, distances and terrains
- Offer loop opportunities
- Provide sufficient mileage

The OHV experiences at the forest can be **diminished by**:

- Limited mileage
- Disconnected loops

- Multiple intersections with non-motorized trails
- Poorly maintained, damaged, rocky or muddy trails
- Lack of signage / confusing trail networks

Snowmobiling:

Snowmobiling offers an opportunity to experience the forest and the landscape in winter on a motorized recreational vehicle. Although the season is sometimes short, snowmobiling is a cherished activity and provides opportunities for users to travel fairly long distances, enjoy the solitude of winter habitats, and make various connections.

Groomed snowmobile trails also provide access to the forest for other users such as cross-country skiers and runners.

Most snowmobilers desire open, groomed trails with safe wetland crossings that connect various access points, parking areas and destinations. Snowmobilers also desire trails that are connected to a broader regional snowmobile network. Mostly, snowmobilers desire snow.

Both Pittsfield and October Mountain contain important trail corridors that connect to the larger Massachusetts Statewide Snowmobile Network as well as attractive loop trails within the forest.

Hunting:

As large and remote state forests, PSF and OMSF both provide valuable hunting opportunities. Hunters enjoy limited seasons when they are allowed to hunt on state lands. Many hunters have special locations that they prefer to visit, and usually desire solitude.

Accessibility of the hunting vicinity – via road, rail, and / or vehicle – is often of primary importance to hunters, especially those with limited mobility.

The hunting experience can be diminished by poor access, encountering other users, limited wildlife and wildlife disturbance

Backcountry Skiing:

Pittsfield State Forest has an important historical connection to backcountry downhill skiing. Many of the PSF trails, such as Shadow and Ghost, were developed as backcountry ski trails by the CCCs. Today, these offer a rare opportunity to experience backcountry skiing.

Backcountry skiers desire open woodland trails with sufficient grade and sight lines to enjoy the sport in deep snow. The experience is diminished as these trails become narrowed by vegetation growth.

Stewarding and improving the trails and environment of PSF and OMSF:

The experience of being able to volunteer one's time and energy to improve an area or trail system that you enjoy is a valuable experience that many seek. Modern society often lacks opportunities to get outside and engage in physical labor, and volunteer stewardship on trails offers the opportunity to improve the environment, enhance recreational experiences and realize visible and tangible accomplishments. Such activities also strengthen participants' sense of connection to the environment and trail system, and provide opportunities for environmental education and skill development.

In addition, the PSF trail system has some significant ongoing maintenance needs, and volunteer stewardship has been and can be a critical component of successful trail system management.

The volunteer stewardship experience is enhanced by well-organized and clearly defined volunteer projects, opportunities to meet and

socialize with others, and projects which have a clear, lasting and visible benefit.

The volunteer experience is diminished by a lack of organization, bureaucratic red-tape, and when the accomplishments do not appear to last or have tangible benefits.

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Washington Mountain Marsh (Photo, Paul Jahnige)

Section 4. Sensitive Natural and Cultural Resources

4.1 Sensitive Sites and Resources

As documented in the RMP, DCR has identified the following resources that are rare or uncommon and potentially sensitive to various forms of trail-based recreation or trail management.

At Pittsfield State Forest, potentially sensitive cultural sites include:

- Historic Shaker sites
- CCC era features, including backcountry ski trails
- Cemeteries and burial grounds

Potentially sensitive natural resources include:

- Vernal Pools and associated upland habitat, especially those supporting rare species that may be susceptible to wheeled recreation
- Forest soils on steep slopes and near streams and wetlands
- Large un-fragmented Forest Cores and associated wildlife habitats

At October Mountain State Forest, DCR has identified the following potentially sensitive resources:

- Public water supplies, their protection zones and associated streams and wetlands
- Values of the Reserve (wilderness recreation, spiritual values, biodiversity, soil formation, and carbon sequestration)
- Large un-fragmented Forest Cores and associated wildlife habitats
- Endangered Species, especially salamanders that might be negatively impacted by wheeled recreation, and breeding birds that might be disturbed by any recreation, including pedestrians and bird-watchers.
- Historic features

Additionally, both state forests, especially areas of October Mountain that are well-drained, level and near water, may have sensitive, below ground, pre-historic archaeological resources. These can potentially be destroyed or damaged by improper soil disturbance, including trail construction and maintenance activities that penetrate below the organic soil layer.

4.2 Ecological Impacts of Trail Activities

All trail-related uses, management and maintenance have impacts on the natural environment. Specifically, trails and trail management leads to soil compaction, vegetation trampling, and wildlife disturbance. Trails and recreational uses also have the potential to change hydrological patterns and lead to soil erosion, sedimentation and wetland degradation. These impacts can be minimized by careful trail planning, keeping users on authorized trails, trail maintenance, and in some cases, trail hardening.

Of particular concern to DCR with respect to the intersection between sensitive resources and trail system management at PSF and OMSF are:

Both legal and illegal OHV trail use. PSF and OMSF are two, of only three, DCR facilities that allow legal 4-wheeled recreational OHVs

on their trail systems. However, OHVs, primarily because of their weight (up to 1,000 pounds) and the forces created by the torque motorized wheels take a very heavy toll on natural surface trails.



Trail use by OHVs tend to displace soils, causing berms and depressions. On slopes, this can quickly lead to trail channelization which contributes to additional soil loss and erosion. In low areas, this can lead to mud holes which also contribute to trail widening and braiding.

The conditions of many OHV trails at PSF and OMSF are poor, and the costs to repair and maintain these trails can be excessive, especially when compared to the relative number of annual users.

Illegal riding, including truck / jeep access, extends these impacts to additional trails and areas and can also significantly impact sensitive wetland resources, cultural sites and wildlife habitats.

Trails on steep slopes and /or trails with a “fall-line” alignment. OMSF and especially PSF have several trails that are located on steep slopes, and many of these have a “fall-line” alignment (in other words, they go straight down hill). Such trails have a tendency to collect and channelize water. This leads to soil erosion and sedimentation downstream, and further trail channelization and poor tread

conditions. These trails are difficult to maintain and negatively impact the forests' natural resources.

Trails in or near wetland resource areas without proper structures. All trail-based recreational uses can negatively impact wetland soils and wetland resource areas. In the absence of appropriate bridges, boardwalks or other hardening, trails in these locations tend to deepen into mud holes, widen and damage wetland habitats and functions. OHV recreation can be particularly damaging in these situations.

Illegal trail building, especially by mountain bikers, and especially in remote parcels. Illegally constructed trails, especially those designed with a single use in mind, destroy vegetation, compact soils, extend wildlife disturbance and negatively impact cultural resources. Those networks constructed by mountain bikers also tend to result in very dense trail networks, and often trails that do not appeal to other users.

Trails that allow wheeled recreation in proximity to vernal pools and vernal pool core habitat. Vernal pools and their associated upland areas provide critical habitat to several rare species. Because these species migrate between pools and upland habitats, they can be very sensitive to trampling, particularly by wheeled recreational users.

Soil Disturbance

Soil disturbance is a necessary part of trail construction and maintenance, but soil disturbance can also negatively impact below-ground archaeological resources. Soils can also be disturbed by illegal OHV use, and unauthorized trail building.



(Photo credit, Pat Gamelli)

Section 5. Management, Staffing and Partners

5.1 DCR Staffing

DCR staffing resources are described in the Resource Management Plan.

5.2 Trails and Forest Management

Both PSF and OMSF include large areas designated as Woodlands under the DCR Landscape Designations. As such, these portions of the state forests will be actively managed for timber and non-timber products and services through forest management and timber harvesting.

Forest management and timber harvesting provides DCR with an additional potential tool for accomplishing various trail system goals. As

an “in-kind services” component of forest management contracts, DCR may be able to accomplish trail repairs, trail re-routes, new parking areas and trail closures relatively efficiently. Models of this are currently being implemented at OMSF and planned at PSF.

5.3 Trail Repairs

At current staffing levels, DCR park staff have little or no capacity for routine trail maintenance, let alone larger periodic trail improvement projects.

Over the past several years, through the support of the Recreational Trails Grants Program (RTP), DCR has employed a small Western

Regional OHV Trail Crew. This crew, working primarily with hand tools, has been able to maintain some drainages, re-deck bridges, and close illegal trails. However, they have not been able to complete major repairs to the OHV trail systems or keep up with the on-going degradation caused by this use.

In recent years, DCR, using RTP funds and DCR Capital Trail Repair funds, has been able to begin making some contracted repairs to the Skyline Trail at PSF, which serves as the backbone for the OHV trail system at this state forest. Unfortunately, these repairs have been quite expensive, on the order of \$345,000 for one mile.

This past year, DCR Forestry was able to complete trail repairs and improvements on the Schoolhouse Trail in October Mountain State Forest as in-kind services in a forest management contract. And DCR Forestry anticipates being able to make some improvements at Pittsfield State Forest as a part of a future planned forest management contract near Potter Mountain Road.

5.4 Potential Funding Resources

Management, maintenance and enhancement of the PSF and OMSF trail systems as recommended by this trail plan will require an investment of in-house, in-kind and direct financial resources. Fortunately, even in the current climate, there are several funding resources that are potentially available to support the recommendations in the plan including:

- DCR Operating funds for seasonal staff
- DCR annual Multi-Use Capital Trail Repair Program
- DCR Special Capital Projects
- OHV Program Fund
- Recreational Trail Grants
- Partnership Matching Grants

- Public – Private Partnerships (see next section)
- In-kind services in forestry contracts

5.5 Partner Resources

As documented in the RMP, neither Pittsfield nor October Mountain has a specific “Friends Group.” However, there are various potential stakeholder groups that may be participating in trail maintenance in the state forests.

Further information about DCR’s Volunteering in Parks Program and a Sample Volunteer Service Agreement (VSA) are included in Appendix G.

Potential third-party partners include:

New England Mountain Biking Association / Local Mountain Bikers. There is a relatively active group of mountain bikers who are passionate about trails in Pittsfield, and to a lesser extent, October Mountain. They can organize to perform trail development, reroutes and maintenance.

Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) / Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC). The AT runs through October Mountain State Forest and the ATC actively organizes maintenance of this section of trail. The AMC is also active in organizing both volunteer and professional trail maintenance and could be engaged in particular projects.

Taconic Hiking Club. Organizes monitoring and maintenance of the Taconic Crest Trail in PSF.

Student Conservation Association. Each year, DCR partners with the Student Conservation Association’s (SCA) MassParks AmeriCorps program to sponsor SCA youth crews to perform a variety of trail stewardship projects in parks, forests and reservations around the state.

Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts (SAM). SAM organizes annual trail maintenance, signage and grooming of snowmobile routes in both PSF and OMSF.

OHV Riders / Dealers. Although not specifically organized into a group, riders have in the past, and may have the potential in the future to help perform maintenance on OHV trails under DCR supervision. Dealers may be interested in supporting trail maintenance.

Western Massachusetts Public Lands Alliance. Is a non-profit organization that is actively advocating for and raising partnership funds for park improvement projects in Western Massachusetts Forest and Parks, including PSF and OMSF.

Other Stewardship Partners. DCR seeks to expand the number and breadth of stewardship partners collaborating at PSF and OMSF, particularly around the issues of trail maintenance, stewardship, and education.

Potential partners may include:

- Backcountry skiers
- Highlands Footpath Committee
- Birding groups
- Berkshire Environmental Action Team
- Others

5.6 Permitting Procedures

All trail maintenance, projects and proposals shall be completed in accordance with DCR's *Trails Guidelines and Best Practices Manual*. Any new trail, major re-route or significant change in use shall be evaluated through a Trail System Plan (such as this) or through the *DCR Trail Proposal and Evaluation Form* which includes review and approval by DCR Operations, Forestry and Planning staff.

Trail maintenance that has the potential to reduce existing erosion and sedimentation

should be prioritized. Trails that currently traverse and impact wetland resources or steep slopes should be evaluated for closure, re-route or repair.

In accordance with DCR's *Trails Guidelines and Best Practices Manual*, any trail activity that has the potential to fill, remove, dredge or alter wetland resource areas will also require permitting by the local conservation commission.

Trails constructed without DCR evaluation and permission will be evaluated for closures.

In addition, in accordance with DCR's *Trails Guidelines and Best Practices Manual*, all trail construction and maintenance activities (including basic maintenance) within Priority Habitat, whether completed by DCR staff or in cooperation with partners, must be reviewed and approved by the NHESP in accordance with the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA) unless it is covered by an exemption.

Trail projects on DCR land must be reviewed by DCR's Office of Cultural Resources (OCR) and potentially the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC;

<http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/>). OCR staff will determine whether the project qualifies as an exemption, or if a Project Notification Form must be filed with the MHC. OCR may also recommend changes to a project to avoid impacts to cultural properties.

Section 6. Recommendations

This plan makes the following 18 priority management recommendations for Pittsfield and October Mountain State Forests. These recommendations are based on DCR staff and public input and are geared toward enhancing the user experience, protecting sensitive resources and minimally managing recreational demand. Table 6.1 summarizes the recommendations, identifies who might have implementation roles and assigns preliminary direct cost estimates for 5-10 year implementation. Section 5.4 identifies potential funding resources.

Combined Recommendations:

6.1 Engage an Experienced OHV Planning Consultant to Develop an OHV Funding, Maintenance and Management Plan

Successful management of a sustainable OHV trail system at any of DCR's motorized facilities will require professional planning assistance from someone with direct experience in OHV trail system management. Engage a consultant, based on the "Draft Scope of Services" (Appendix F), to assist DCR in identifying:

- Models of successful OHV management in the Northeast
- Specific DCR OHV trail system routine maintenance, equipment and basic staffing and / or contracting needs
- Additional recommended OHV trail system capital enhancements
- Cost estimates for annual maintenance and capital enhancements

- Revenue, concession, public-private partnership and other funding opportunities

6.2 Expand Regional and Complex Staffing to Successfully Manage and Maintain these Multi-Use Trail Systems

- Backfill the Western Regional Trail Coordinator Position / Create a Regional Volunteer Coordinator. These positions are key to evaluating, prioritizing and completing routine and periodic trail maintenance.
- Staff a seasonal OHV trail maintenance crew with appropriate mechanized equipment. At a minimum this crew should consist of:
 - Seasonal supervisor
 - Equipment operator
 - Laborer
 - Mini-excavator / Bobcat
- Continue to make use of SCA and contracted crews as available and necessary to complete additional trail repair projects.

6.3 Implement Approved Trail Recommendations in Cooperation with Stewardship Partners

- DCR has limited staff and financial resources to actively maintain, improve, create or close trails. Fortunately, many stewardship partners are active in PSF and OMSF. Most notably, these include:
 - Student Conservation Association
 - Snowmobile Association of Mass
 - Mountain Bikers / NEMBA

- Taconic Hiking Club
- Backcountry Skiers
- OHV Riders
- Berkshire Environmental Action Team
- Western Mass Public Lands Alliance
- DCR's Volunteering in Parks Program and Sample Volunteer Service Agreement are included in Appendix G.
- Establish Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) and / or Stewardship Agreements with partner organizations. These will outline roles, responsibilities, permitting requirements and expectations, and institute an annual process for workplan for review and approval of activities.
- Ensure that all DCR or partner activities are appropriately reviewed, permitted and approved.
- Encourage third-party groups to assist in volunteer organization and management at PSF and OMSF.

6.4 Produce a New Maps for PSF and OMSF

- New maps should uses DCR Trail Inventory data, modern symbology, updated trail names, interpretive information and suggested routes
- Explore local sponsorship for designing and printing of the maps.

6.5 Create Disincentives to Help Halt Illegal Trail Building

- Close, block and naturalize targeted illegal trails (see Recommendation 6.8 and 6.16)
- Monitor target areas and immediately close any re-opened trails or new trails

- Enhance public information, education and signage to raise awareness of illegal trail issues and impacts
- Work cooperatively with willing stakeholders to create new approved connections, maintain legal trails and monitor trail networks
- Install wildlife cameras and engage DCR Rangers and Environmental Police in sting operations

Pittsfield State Forest:

6.6 Enhance Trail Marking, Wayfinding and User Information

- Develop and install intersection directional signage consistent with DCR's guidelines at key intersection, including:
 - Family trails
 - Skyline Trail
 - Taconic Crest Trail
 - Balance Rock area
- Install new trailhead kiosks, providing user information, map and notice space at key trailheads, including:
 - Balance Rock
 - Potter Mountain Road
 - Headquarters area
 - Lulu Cascade parking lot
 - Route 20

6.7 Repair and Maintain Priority Trails and Trail Segments

- Continue to repair channelized segments of the Taconic Skyline Trail, add drainage structures and stabilize tread. Maintain drainage structures annually.

- Install and maintain water bars, drainage dips and grade reversals on the CCC, Griffin, Shaker Brook, Churchill, Daniels, Burgoyne and Potter Mountain Trail.
- Clear vegetation on the Shadow and Ghost Trails to restore them for backcountry skiing.
- Re-route poor condition, fall-line segments of targeted trails, including:
 - Griffin Trail (center sections)
 - Burgoyne Trail (lower half)
 - Skyline Trail (northern end)

6.8 Block, Close and Restore Poor-Condition, Fall-Line, Illegal and Difficult to Manage Trails and Access Points.

- Successful trail closures can be difficult to accomplish. Appendix B, “Closing and Restoring Trails” details a multi-pronged approach to trail closures that can be successful which involves user education, barriers, closing sight lines and sometimes restoring tread.
- Close, block, naturalize and remove from our map poor-condition, fall-line DCR trails that lead off DCR lands to adjacent private lands including:
 - Brickhouse Mountain Road
 - Brickhouse Mountain Trail
 - May Brook Trail
 - Brook Trail (lower portion)
 - Utility Line Trail to Smith Mt
 - Lebanon Springs Rd
 - Tower Mt Rd
 - Utility line access to Potter Mt
 - Short Trail
- Close access between PSF Trail System and Potter Mountain Utility corridor and Jiminy Peak (except for winter access)

- Close, block and naturalize illegally constructed trails that are difficult to manage, create dense networks or lead off DCR lands to adjacent private lands including:
 - Targeted trails in the Silver Street parcel (i.e. Bear Field)
 - Trails north of Balance Rock area that go off DCR property (i.e. Ribbon)
 - Trails north of Lulu Brook that go off DCR property (i.e. Honey Bear)
 - All unauthorized newly constructed trails
- Coordinate these recommended trail closers with future planned forest and fire management activities and local public safety officials.

6.9 Authorize Target Trails as Legal. Add Signage, Blazing and Include on Maps.

- Authorize as legal, some illegally constructed mountain bike trails (contingent of others remaining closed), including those currently known as:
 - Six Mile
 - Hon-Lulu
 - Turner Connector
 - Boy Scout
 - Girl Scout
- Concentrate any future single-track mountain biking trails for consideration in the designated Parkland area.
- Re-open trails to OHV use (contingent on current condition and status of repairs and re-routes), including:
 - Taconic Skyline (southern section)
 - Griffin
 - Brook
 - CCC (southern section)
 - Daniels

- Burgoyne
- Taconic Skyline (northern section)
- Potter Mountain Trail

6.10 Enhance the OHV Riding Experience at PSF by Developing New Trail Connections and Parking Area (if approved)

- All new trails shall be evaluated through the DCR Trail Proposal Form, and shall be developed consistent with DCR Guidelines for building sustainable trails (contour, side-slope, bench cut, etc.), and avoid and minimize impacts to sensitive natural and cultural resources.
- Consider new non-motorized trail connections and loops that enhance the non-motorized user experiences, including:
 - Shaker Sanai Loop, connecting the Shaker Mountain Trail to the Holy Mountain Trail to the North Family Trail on hiking only loops.
 - Pine Mountain Connector, creating a loop on the Pine Mountain Trail
 - Pine Mountain to Turner Connector, connect the tops of the Pine Mountain and Parker Brook trails to the North Branch and Turner trails to form a non-motorized loop from the Headquarters area.
 - Lulu to Balance Connector, creating a non-motorized trail connecting Lulu Cascade Parking to Balance Rock.
- Consider new OHV trail connections and loops that enhance the motorized user experiences, including:
 - Griffin Ridge Loop, creating a new sustainable loop trail atop the ridge.
 - West Mountain Loop, creating a new sustainable loop trail atop the ridge

- Layout, permit and construct a new OHV parking area on Route 20, and new connector trail to Griffin and Taconic Skyline.
- Coordinate these recommended potential new connections with future planned forest and fire management activities.

6.11 Restore and Create Vista and Destinations along the Trail System

- Restore and create vistas / destinations. Potential locations include:
 - West Mountain
 - Tower Mountain
 - Pine Mountain
 - Turner Trail
 - Upper Honwee Trail
 - North Taconic Ridge
- Integrate above recommendations with active forest management

October Mountain

State Forest:

6.12 Enhance Trail Marking, Wayfinding and User Information

- Develop and install intersection directional signage consistent with DCR's guidelines at key intersection, including:
 - Schoolhouse Trail and Loop
 - Finerty Pond area
 - Schermerhorn Gorge
 - Navin, Tannery, Boulder area
 - Appalachian Trail
- Install new trailhead kiosks, providing user information, map, and notice space at key trailheads, including:
 - Finerty Trail Trailhead
 - Campground
 - Spruce Trail Trailhead
 - Felton Pond
- Refresh blazing, consistent with DCR guidelines, on all approved trails.

6.13 Repair Trail Damage and Poor Conditions on Target Trails

- Repair mud-holes, washouts, ruts, bridges and drainage issues on target trails, including:
 - Felton Pond Road
 - Schoolhouse
 - Cordonier
 - Navin
 - Gorilla
 - Boulder

6.14 Expand / Enhance Parking Areas to Improve User Access

- Establish and develop a new parking area (with capacity for OHV trailers) at Four Corners and / or Schoolhouse Trailhead, including:
 - Guardrails to define area
 - Gravel base to protect soils
 - Trailhead kiosk
- Create a new parking area at Stanley Road.
- Improve parking areas at Finerty Trail Trailhead and Spruce Trail Trailhead with parking definition and kiosks.

6.15 Repair and Reopen Schermerhorn Road

6.16 Discontinue OHV use on target trails and close target poor-condition, fall-line and difficult to maintain trails to protect water supplies, reserve values, steep slopes, forest soils and adjacent property owners.

- Discontinue authorized OHV (not including winter snowmobile use) on target trails that go off DCR land, including:
 - Ashley Lake Road / Ashley Trail
 - New Lenox Road Trail
 - Cordonier Trail
- Close, block and naturalize target trails, including:
 - Schermerhorn Trail
 - Switchback Trail

- Close, block, naturalize and monitor targeted illegally constructed trails in the Sykes Mountain area north of New Lenox Road.
- Coordinate these recommendations with future planned forest and fire management activities and local public safety officials.

6.17 Enhance the OHV Riding Experience at OMSF by Developing New OHV Trails and Connections (if approved)

- All new trails shall be evaluated through the DCR Trail Proposal Form, and shall be developed consistent with DCR Guidelines for building sustainable trails (contour alignment, frequent grade reversals, bench cut, hardened where needed, etc.) Many areas of OMSF are very rocky and not suitable for trail development.
- Establish a legal and sustainable trail connections between parking areas (including Schoolhouse Trailhead / Four Corners) and OHV loop trails, including:
 - Schoolhouse Trail and Loop
 - Navin Trail and associated loops
 - Gorilla Trail
 - Evaluate options for routing OHV use on shoulders of existing roads and management ways, particularly between Gate 6 and 19
- Evaluate for development, new trails connections, including:
 - Four Corners to Gorilla Trail
 - Finerty Pond Road to Gorilla Trail / Watson Road
 - Gorilla Trail to Schoolhouse
- Coordinate these recommendations with future planned forest and fire management activities.

6.18 Enhance the non-motorized trail user experience by creating linkages and connections between existing non-motorized trails

- All new trails shall be evaluated through the DCR Trail Proposal Form, and shall be developed consistent with DCR Guidelines for building sustainable trails (contour alignment, frequent grade reversals, bench cut, hardened where needed, etc.)
- Evaluate creating a hiking loop opportunity for the Roaring Brook Trail.
- Concentrate future single-track mountain biking trails in the designated Parkland area connecting between the campground and Schermerhorn Road.
- Evaluate potential pedestrian trail connection between Schermerhorn Road and the Washington Mt Marsh Trail, and other routes suggested as a part of the Highlands Footpath initiative.
- Coordinate these recommendations with future planned forest and fire management activities.

6.19 Recommendations Table

This plan makes the following 18 priority management recommendations for Pittsfield and October Mountain State Forests. These recommendations are based on DCR staff and public input and geared toward enhancing the user experience, protecting sensitive resources and minimally managing recreational demand. Table 6.1 summarizes the recommendations, identifies who might have implementation roles and assigns a preliminary direct cost estimates for 5-10 year implementation of \$3,314,200. Section 5.4 of the plan identifies potential funding sources.

Table 6.1 Trail System Recommendations

Recommendation	Cost/Resource Estimate	Implementation ^a
6.1 Engage an Experienced OHV Planning Consultant to Develop an OHV Funding, Maintenance and Management Plan	\$50,000	P (R, F)
6.2 Expand Regional and Complex Staffing to Successfully Manage and Maintain these Multi-Use Trail Systems	1 FTE, 4 seasonal	R
6.3 Implement Approved Trail Recommendations in Cooperation with Stewardship Partners	Staff coordination time	V, X, R
6.4 Produce a New Maps for PSF and OMSF	\$8,000	C, I, X, P, R
6.5 Create Disincentives to Help Halt Illegal Trail Building	In-house	X, P, F, R
PITTSFIELD STATE FOREST		
6.6 Enhance Trail Marking, Wayfinding and User Information	\$15,000	R, P, I, C
6.7 Repair and Maintain Priority Trails and Trail Segments	\$1,268,000	P, C, R, E, F
6.8 Block, Close and Restore Poor-Condition, Fall-Line, Illegal and Difficult to Manage Trails and Access Points.	\$44,000 & In-kind	C, F, P
6.9 Authorize Target Trails as Legal. Add Signage, Blazing and Include on Maps.	In-house	P, R, X, F
6.10 Enhance the OHV Riding Experience at PSF by Developing New Trail Connections and Parking Area (if approved)	\$260,000	P, F, C
6.11 Restore and Create Vista and Destinations along the Trail System	\$7,400 & In-kind	F, C

- a. The following codes identify the party or parties responsible for implementing the recommendations: B = Bureau of Ranger Services; C = Contractor; E = Division of Engineering; F = Bureau of Forest Fire Control and Forestry; I = Interpretive Services; L = Legal Services; O = Other; P = Bureau of Planning, Design & Resource Protection; R = Regional and district staff; U = Universal Access Program; V = Volunteer or partner; and X = Office of External Affairs and Partnerships.

Table 6.1 Trail System Recommendations, Continued

Recommendation	Cost/Resource Estimate	Implementation^a
OCTOBER MOUNTAIN STATE FOREST		
6.12 Enhance Trail Marking, Wayfinding and User Information	\$15,000	R, P, I, C
6.13 Repair and Maintain Priority Trails and Trail Segments	\$1,249,000	P, C, R, E, F
6.14 Expand / Enhance Parking Areas to Improve User Access	\$98,000 & In-kind	F, P, E, C
6.15 Repair and Reopen Schermerhorn Road	\$600,000	E
6.16 Protect water supplies, reserve values, steep slopes and forest soils, by discontinuing OHV use on target trails and closing target poor-condition, fall-line and difficult to maintain trails	\$44,000 & In-kind	P, R, F
6.17 Enhance the OHV Riding Experience at OMSF by Developing New OHV Trails and Connections (if approved)	\$285,000	P, E, R, F, C
6.18 Enhance the non-motorized trail user experience by creating linkages and connections between existing non-motorized trails	\$22,200	P, R, C, V, F

- b. The following codes identify the party or parties responsible for implementing the recommendations: B = Bureau of Ranger Services; C = Contractor; E = Division of Engineering; F = Bureau of Forest Fire Control and Forestry; I = Interpretive Services; L = Legal Services; O = Other; P = Bureau of Planning, Design & Resource Protection; R = Regional and district staff; U = Universal Access Program; V = Volunteer or partner; and X = Office of External Affairs and Partnerships.

Appendix A

Understanding User Conflict on Recreational Trails

To help understand trail conflict, the Federal Highway Administration and the National Recreational Trails Advisory Committee have produced “Conflicts on Multiple-Use Trails Synthesis of the Literature and State of Practice,” available at www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/conflicts/conf1.htm. Conflict in outdoor recreation settings (such as trails) can best be defined as goal interference attributed to another's behavior. It then identifies the following 12 principles for minimizing conflicts on multiple-use trails.

Adherence to these principles can help improve sharing and cooperation on multiple-use trails.

1. **Recognize Conflict as Goal Interference:** Do not treat conflict as an inherent incompatibility among different trail activities, but goal interference attributed to another's behavior. For example, if a user's goal is to view wildlife, a group of screaming teens can interfere with that goal.
2. **Provide Adequate Trail Opportunities to Minimize Contacts:** Offer adequate trail mileage and provide opportunities for a variety of trail experiences. This will help reduce congestion and allow users to choose the conditions that are best suited to the experiences they desire.
3. **Establish Appropriate User Expectations:** If users expect to find the conditions and uses that they actually encounter, they are more likely to be tolerant of them. Use signage, interpretive information, and trail design to establish appropriate expectations.
4. **Involve Users as Early as Possible:** Identify the present and likely future users of each trail and involve them in the process of avoiding and resolving conflicts as early as possible.
5. **Understand User Needs:** Determine the motivations, desired experiences, norms, setting preferences, and other needs of the present and likely future users of each trail.
6. **Identify the Actual Sources of Conflict:** Help users to identify the specific tangible causes of any conflicts they are experiencing.
7. **Work with Affected Users:** Work with all parties involved to reach mutually agreeable solutions to these specific issues.
8. **Promote Trail Etiquette:** Minimize the possibility that any particular trail contact will result in conflict by actively and aggressively promoting responsible trail behavior. Use existing educational materials or modify them to better meet local needs.
9. **Encourage Positive Interaction Among Different Users:** Trail users are usually not as different from one another as they believe. Providing positive interactions both on and off the trail will help break down barriers and stereotypes, and build understanding, good will, and cooperation.
10. **Favor "Light-Handed Management":** This is essential in order to provide the freedom of choice and natural environments that are so important to trail-based recreation. Intrusive design, too many signs and coercive management are not compatible with high-quality trail experiences.
11. **Plan and Act Locally:** Whenever possible, address issues regarding multiple-use trails at the local level.
12. **Monitor Progress:** Monitor the ongoing effectiveness of the decisions made and programs implemented.

Appendix B



May / June 2010 No. 36

Closing and Restoring Trails

(Revised 2/26/14 for use at archeologically sensitive sites)

All trails impact the natural environment and require on-going maintenance. But some trails, usually as a result of poor layout and design or illegal usage, are more damaging than others, require excessive maintenance, and diminish the user's experience. At Pittsfield and October Mountain State Forests there are many, particularly motorized, trails that are in very poor condition and cannot be effectively maintained. In addition, illegal trail building, primarily by mountain bikers, are impacting soils and vegetation, and foster a culture of non-compliance.

Rather than try to maintain trouble trails over and over, in many cases, closing and restoring poor condition, redundant or illegal trails is the best solution for your trail system – environmentally, culturally, economically, and socially.

However, as anyone who has tried to close a trail knows, simply putting up a sign or piling brush at the trail entrance does not work. The compacted soils of the trail tread can resist naturalization for many years, and as long as open sight lines persist, users will continue to use the trail.

In most cases, successfully closing and restoring trails takes as much planning and effort as constructing new trails. The following Best Practices can help successfully close problem trails.

Provide a Better Option

The most important component of successfully closing a trail is to make sure there is a more appealing and obvious alternative. This includes ensuring that the new route is well designed and marked, and **flows seamlessly** from existing trails. This may require redesigning trail intersections to take away open sight lines and create smooth transitions that keep users on the preferred route.



For illegal trails, better marking legal trails will help keep users on appropriate trails.

Educate Users

Users who do not understand why a trail is being closed may undo all your efforts. When closing trails it is important to let users know that you are closing trails, and more importantly, why. Post information on trailheads, recruit volunteers to assist and encourage users to spread the word. **Focus on the benefits** of closing trails including habitat and water quality protection, along with a better trail experience.



Halt Ongoing Erosion

Some trails requiring closure will be fall-line trails that channelize water and experience continuing erosion. In order to close and naturalize these trails, active, on-going erosion must be stopped. **Check dams and slash** should be used to stem water flow and stabilize soils while naturalization occurs.

Check dams should only be placed on fall-line slopes, should be laid within the trail tread and should involve a minimum of additional soils disturbance.

Close Sight Lines

Trails you can see are trails you will use. Even though barriers, signs and slash have been used to close the trail, the open sight lines still invite users to explore. The most effective way to close off sight lines is to **transplant native vegetation** in the trail corridor, especially any place a trail is visible from another trail. In other places along the closed trail, slash can be used to disguise the trail tread.

Dropping trees across the entrances and periodically along the trail may be the best way to close sight lines and discourage use.

Consider Breaking Up Tread and Re-contouring the Land

Compacted trail tread will likely resist naturalization. Have you ever come across an old road in the woods that has not been used for years? Breaking up the soil with pulaskis and pick-mattocks, and scarifying the soil will allow natural regeneration to take hold. Re-contouring the land, particularly for eroded trails, will help remove evidence of old trails.



Block the Corridor

As a last resort, you can block the beginning and end of the trail with a fence and signs. The fence will look out of place, and could draw more attention to the closure. Be prepared to answer questions by posting signage explaining the closure on, or near, the fence. When the trail has been closed for a while the fence can be removed. This strategy may be needed especially at locations where users are looking for views and water access.

Don't Introduce or Spread Exotic Plants

Use local soils and plants in your trail reclamation project if possible. If outside materials are used, make sure they are certified weed-free and native. Clean tools and work boots before bringing them from other sites to ensure that invasive seeds are not transported.

Monitor Your Closure

Return periodically to monitor the success of your closure. Ascribe to the “broken window” theory of trail maintenance. If your closure is vandalized or damaged, fix it immediately.

Tips and Tools (Mattock and McLeod)

Closing and Reclaiming Damaged Trails webpage by IMBA is at http://www.imba.com/resources/trail_building/reclaiming_trail.html

Naturalizing Abandoned Trail from the FHWA Trail Maintenance and Construction Notebook is at: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/fspubs/00232839/page12.htm>

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources “Trail Planning, Design and Development Guidelines” (http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/publications/trails_waterways/index.html) includes a section of decommissioning and restoring unsustainable trails.

To unsubscribe from this list, simply email paul.jahnige@state.ma.us with your email address and type “unsubscribe” in the subject or body.

To subscribe, please email your contact information to paul.jahnige@state.ma.us.

Please forward to others who might be interested in Massachusetts Greenways and Trails.



Connections is the electronic newsletter from the Department of Conservation and Recreation's Greenways and Trails Program,
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Northampton, MA 01060
(413) 586-8706 ext. 20
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www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/greenway/index.htm

Appendix C

DCR Trails Guidelines and Best Practices Manual (Section edited to provide guidance for the State Forest Trail Plans)

Trail Signage

*"Signs are probably the quickest and easiest way to leave the trail user with a positive impression. If the signs are high quality, well maintained, and properly located, other trail problems are often over-looked. Consistent signs are the quickest way to increase the trail's identity and the public's support for the trail."
(National Park Service)*

Current DCR Trail Marking

DCR currently employs a variety of different types of trail signs and marking systems including plastic blazes, painted blazes, plastic trail name signs, routed trail name and directional signs, interpretive signs, aluminum trail rules signs, and trailhead kiosks. These trail signage and marking standards will help improve trail management and user safety, and enhance the users' recreational experience. While achieving these standards may take years to realize, working toward them incrementally over time is an important goal.

Why Strive for Consistent Signage Standards?

Appropriate trail signs and markings provide information, enhance safety, and contribute to a positive user experience. Trail signage is perhaps our most important form of communication with our users, as signs are the messages that users see every time they visit. Consistent signage enhances safety, creates a positive trail identity, helps meet user expectations, and contributes to the public's support for trails.

The broad objectives of DCR's trail signage should be to:

1. Provide consistent positive exposure of the trail system to attract users
2. Educate the user about trails and trail uses
3. Reassure / ensure that the user is on the right trail and will not get lost
4. Control trail usage, reduce conflicts, and create safer, more enjoyable, and environmentally friendly recreational experiences

However, these objectives must be balanced with aesthetic considerations to avoid "sign pollution."

We accomplish these objectives through the consistent use of the following different kinds of trail marking:

- Trailhead signs and kiosks
- Intersection directional signs
- Reassurance markers and blazes
- Interpretive displays

It is important to consider the different purposes of each type of sign and use them appropriately. For example, using reassurance blazes to indicate allowed trail uses is probably inappropriate because it may require more blazing, and is very difficult to change if the allowed uses change. On the other hand, using trailhead signage to designate allowed uses is simpler to implement, requires much less maintenance, and can be easily changed.

Implementation Priority

Implementing the below standards fully within the DCR system will take time. The priority for implementation should be as follows:

1. Fully implement the sign standards wherever new trails are developed or constructed.
2. Fully implement the standards when trails undergo significant restoration or repair.
3. Implement the appropriate standards as possible as trails are worked on through routine maintenance. For example, when a trail is maintained, re-blaze then, remove old plastic signage and install key intersection signs.
4. Implement the intersection signage standards park-wide.
5. Implement full signage standards park-wide.

General Trail Signage and Marking Standards

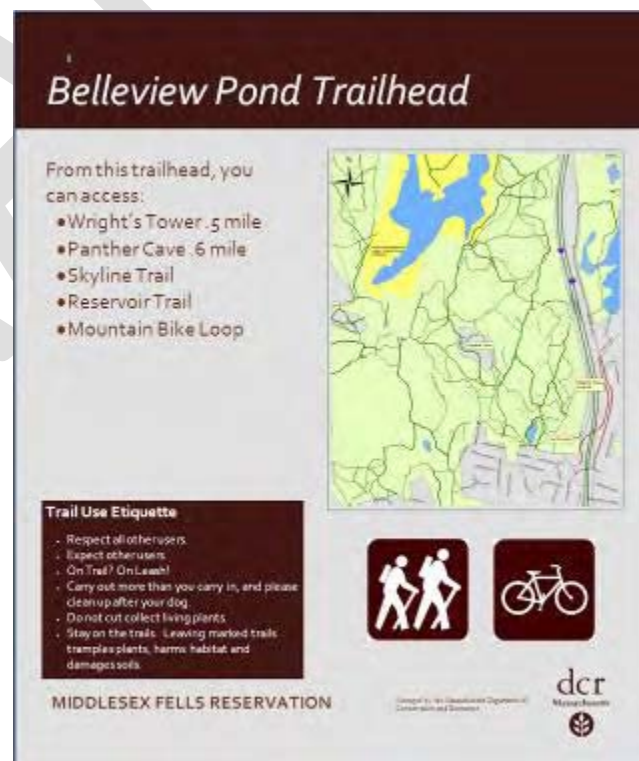
- Signage within PSF should be consistent with respect to colors, materials, and look.
- Intersection directional signs and simple trailhead signs should be routed brown signs (wood or plastic composite material) with white lettering. Routed signs are aesthetically appealing and resistant to damage and vandalism.
- Trails should be blazed in painted 2x6 vertical blazes.
- Aluminum trail signs are **not** recommended.

Trailhead Signs

Trailhead kiosks or signs may come in different forms depending on the setting, complexity, and information needs.

For more developed trailheads, popular trails or high profile trails, a designed and professionally fabricated trailhead sign is appropriate. The template (right) follows the general standards for “Wayside Signage” in the in the DCR Graphics Standards Manual. This template includes:

- A sign board of approximately 20” wide by 24” in height (5:6 portrait orientation).
- Trail name or Trailhead name in Frutiger Italics in a 4” (1/6) brown band at the top.
- Text message (in sabon font) with trail description and perhaps additional information placed in the upper left text box.
- A map showing features, destinations, distances and connections in the upper right.
- Standard “Trail User Etiquette” is in a brown box in the lower left.
- Allowed and prohibited use symbols are in the lower right.
- Allowed and prohibited use symbols may also be in 4” x 4” square signs mounted on the posts below the sign.



- Park name is in capitals, left justified at the bottom with the DCR logo in the lower right corner.
- The position of the map, text boxes and symbols may be flexible depending on the specific needs of each sign.
- This type of sign should be affixed with brackets to two 4x4 pressure treated wood posts planted 24" in the ground.

On roadsides or at lower profile trailheads, simpler routed wood signs may be used. These should be:

- A sign board of approximately 21" wide by 15" in height (5:7 ratio landscape orientation)
- Trail name in Frutiger italics at about .8" – 1"
- Key trail destinations and distances at about .5"
- State Park Name in caps at the bottom
- "dcr" in the lower right corner
- Information and symbols showing allowed and prohibited trail uses and trail difficulties. This information may be in 4"x4" square signs mounted on the post below the sign.
- Sign should be affixed with lag bolts to a single 4x4 pressure treated wood post planted 24" in the ground.



Intersection Directional Signs

Within PSF, directional signs **should** be placed at main trail intersections, decision points, and spur junctions. Intersections signs should be mounted on wood posts. Post type should be consistent within the site. Trails names and arrows **may** also be placed vertically on wood posts.

Intersection directional signs are the most important source of information for users, and can serve to enhance safety,

avoid bad user experiences, and increase use

of under-used sections of the trail. If someone knows that there is a tower, waterfall or other attraction down the trail, they may be tempted to hike to it and thus become intrigued with the trail idea.



Intersection signs **should** include the following information:

- Trail name, if the trail is named
- The closest significant destination (such as a view, summit, waterfalls, etc.)
- The closest trailhead
- A farther major destination or point of reference (such as road main entrance, major summit, overnight shelter, etc.)



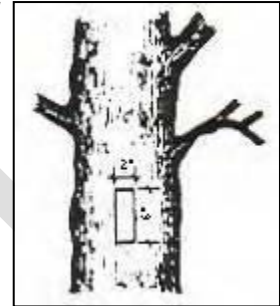
- The distance to the destinations in miles and tenths
- The direction to these destinations indicated by arrows may be necessary
- "dcr" in the lower right corner
- markings for allowed or restricted uses
- intersection number in the lower left corner

In complex trail systems with numerous intersections, intersection numbering can be used and listed on an accompanying trail map. Numbers should not be used instead of directional signage, but can be used in conjunction and can be placed on the intersection directional sign in the lower left corner.

Reassurance Markers/Blazes

Trail blazes or reassurance markers are important trail elements that allow the user to stay on trails and provide a sense of reassurance. The recommended guidelines are consistent with best management practices for trail marking.

Official DCR trails **should** be blazed with vertical **painted blazes**. Plastic blazes should be avoided and replaced when trails are re-blazed, upgraded or maintained. Painted blazes are more vandal resistant, do less damage than nail-on blazes, and are easier to alter.



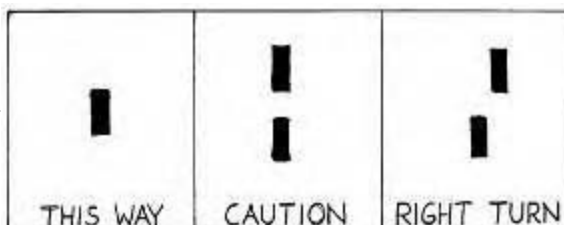
Blazes are placed on trees, slightly above eye level so that hikers, bikers or riders can see them easily when traveling in either direction. Blazes should be placed immediately beyond any trail junction or road crossing. Blazes along continuous trail segments need only be periodic, as tread is well established. It is not desirable to have more than one blaze visible in either direction at any one time. One well placed blaze is better than several that are poorly placed, and it is important to strike a balance between "over-blazing" and "under-blazing."

Standard blazes should be 2" x 6" vertical rectangles. The 2" x 6" rectangular shape is large enough to be seen easily without being visually obtrusive and is the most universally accepted style of trail blazing. Edges and corners should be crisp and sharp. Dripping paint, blotches and over-sized blazes should be avoided. On rough barked trees, the tree will first need to be smoothed using a paint scraper, wire brush, or draw knife. A high quality, glossy, exterior acrylic paint such as Sherman Williams Metalatex or Nelson Boundary Paints should be used for long durability.

Vegetation should be pruned from in front of the blazes to ensure visibility in all seasons.

In non-forested areas, blazes may be placed on wooden posts 4 feet above the ground or stone cairns may be used to mark the trail. Blazes can be painted on exposed rock, but will not be visible in the winter.

Directional Change Indicators



Double blazes should be used in places that require extra user alertness (e.g. important turns, junctions with other trails, and other

confusing locations). They should be used sparingly so that they do not become meaningless or visually obtrusive. They are unnecessary at gradual turns and well-defined trail locations such as switchbacks. A reassurance marker should be placed so that it can be seen from the direction indicator. Be sure to mark confusing areas to guide users coming from both (or all) directions. Avoid arrows.

Interpretive Displays

An interpretive sign must be part of a well thought out interpretive plan complete with goals, objectives, thematic statements and topics. The plan should be based on an audience and site analysis which will guide the selection of materials and interpretive approach. Contact the Interpretive Services section of the Bureau of Ranger Services if you are interested in developing an interpretive plan. Once you have completed your interpretive plan, you will need to confer with Interpretive Services and the DCR Graphics Team to develop specific displays. An outline of the wayside development process is available in the DCR Graphic Standards Manual.

Interpretive waysides are an important and effective way to provide information to visitors. There are two types of wayside: low profile and upright. Low profile exhibits are low, angled panels that provide an interpretive message related to a specific place or feature. They usually include one or more pictorial images and a brief interpretive text. Upright waysides typically provide general information, rather than site-specific interpretation; they are often located near a visitors center or trailhead to provide information about facilities, programs, and management policies.

The panels are fabricated from a high-pressure laminate material, which is both cost-effective and allows the use of color to create a more attractive presentation. They are generally guaranteed for 10 years by the fabricators, and are resistant to vandalism by spray paint or cutting. The Graphic Design team will coordinate fabrication through the state vendor program.

Sign Maintenance

Sign maintenance is critical to the operation of a quality trail system. Well maintained signs that are repaired promptly convey a sense of pride and reduce further vandalism. Signs are a highly visible representation of the quality of the trail. Their maintenance or lack of maintenance leaves the visitor with a positive or negative impression about the trail. Signs convey many kinds of information and it is critical that they be in good shape. Special attention should be given to those that are damaged from shooting and other factors, those that are faded or brittle from long exposure, and those that are simply missing. All signs that are damaged or weathered no longer convey a good impression or serve the intended purpose, and should be repaired or replaced. Periodic painting and other maintenance is a necessity and will prolong the life of a sign.

Temporary Trail Signage and Blazing

Some uses such as seasonal snowmobiling or special events may require temporary trail blazes and signs. Temporary signs installed by DCR partners should be allowed under a Special Use Permit or MOA and should follow these guidelines.

- Temporary signs shall be approved by the facility supervisor
- They should be installed on posts rather than nailed to trees
- They shall not advertise specific vendors
- They shall be removed when the seasonal or temporary use is over
- Temporary signs shall not be inconsistent with these DCR standards

Appendix D

Notes from Pittsfield State Forest Public Trail Planning Workshop

On February 25, 2015, DCR hosted a participatory public trail planning workshop for Pittsfield State Forest at the West Region Headquarters. Over 40 participants attended and participated in six different breakout group brainstorming and facilitated mapping sessions. Each group then reported back to the entire audience. All notes, comments and mapped input was captured. Overview notes are as follows:

Multiple Groups Recommendations:

- Improve trailhead and intersection signage
- Improve trail map
- Improve parking and access at West St
- Create new parking and OHV access at Route 20
- Open gates for hunting season
- Make it easier for the public to volunteer
- Authorize / keep trails that are in good condition
- Improve / re-open views and viewsheds

Group A: Recommendations

- Eliminate OHV use at Balance Rock
- Clean up Balance Rock area and rock
- Improve trailhead and intersection signage
- Reduce number of OHV access points
- Authorize trails that are well laid out, constructed, and in good condition, including:
 - Turner connector
 - Honolulu
 - Six Miles
- (This does not mean illegal trails will be or should be automatically accepted)\
- Re-route Skyline to avoid vernal pools by generous margin in Twin / Cranberry Pond area
- Enforce OHV rules in essential
- Create a non-motorized connection between Lulu Brook area and Balance Rock
- Provide special protection for "The Gorge" (west of West and Smith Mts)
- Make it easier for the public to volunteer
- Create a non-motorized connector between Parker Brook and Turner Trails.
- Reroute Shaker Trail to not impact historic sites
- Open up vistas and views, including:
 - Tower Mt
 - Honolulu trail

Group B: Recommendations

- Improve safety / sense of safety at Route 20 pull-off area / Taconic Crest Trailhead
- Improve parking and access at West St
- Improve signage, including:
 - TCT Intersection signage are Twin Pond

- Near Lebanon Springs Rd
 - Near Tower Rd
- Improve / Revise Trail Map, including:
 - Mileage
 - Difficulty
 - Recommended loops for different uses
- Restore / open backcountry ski trails, Shadow and Ghost
- Address Brickhouse Mt Trail / Road
- Improve connection to / at Pine Mountain Trail

Group C: Recommendations

- Desire for interconnected snowmobile corridors
- Desire for snowmobile loop ride opportunities within the State Forest
- Maintain all current snowmobile trails as open to that use
- Keep all existing OHV trails and restore / repair lost trail miles
- Don't "over fix" the trails
- Need funds to both fix and maintain trails
- Full size parking lot in West St area
- Create new parking and OHV access at Route 20

Group D: Recommendations

- Open up access (vehicle) points, too many gated roads, including:
 - West St
 - Potter Mt Road
 - NY Side access
 - Open gates 1 hour before sunrise and close 2 hours after
 - Provide gates for purchase or permit with log
- Make use of volunteers
- Provide / improve parking at authorized trailheads
- Create new parking and OHV access at Route 20
- Establish OHV fees and use for trail maintenance
- Increase timber cutting to create wildlife habitat
- Restore azalea field
- Reopen access to Berry Pond Circuit Rd
- Open Ski Lodge to visitors year round
- Extend OHV use to after hunting season

Group E: Recommendations

- Authorize / keep trails that are in good condition, including
 - Chipmunk
 - 6 Mile
 - Hidden Valley
- Improve / re-open views and viewsheds, including
 - Pine Mt Trail
 - Honolulu
 - Top of Turner Trail
- Restore / open old ski trails

- Expand non-motorized trail system between West St and Route 20
- Improve intersection signage (avoid Carsonite)
- Improve map (map sucks), include trail names
- Separate motorized and non-motorized uses
- Make non-motorized connector trails between trails / add loops
 - Connect to TCT at north end of ridge
 - Connect North Branch / Turner to Tilden Swamp / Pine Mt
 - Connect Pine Mt Trail to TCT
- Provide a free pass to volunteers
- Too many fall line trails
- Use logging to create better, bench cut, grade reversal OHV trails

Group F: Recommendations

- Improve parking and hunting access, including
 - NY Brickyard Rd
 - NY Lebanon Springs Rd
- Maintain trails that exist
- Create OHV parking and access at Route 20
- Create an annual permit and waiver program
- Hunting access is different from OHV recreational access
- Vehicle access is a must for emergencies
- Open gates for hunting season

Appendix E

Notes from October Mountain State Forest Public Trail Planning Workshop

On March 4, 2015, DCR hosted a participatory public trail planning workshop for October Mountain State Forest at the West Region Headquarters. Over 25 participants attended and participated in four different breakout group brainstorming and facilitated mapping sessions. Each group then reported back to the entire audience. All notes, comments and mapped input was captured. Overview notes are as follows:

Multiple Groups Recommendations:

- Fix Schermerhorn Road
- Improve Signage
- Improve Map
- Create loop opportunities for both motorized and non-motorized users
- Increase / enhance parking
- Make use of volunteers

Group A: Recommendations

- Need to connect trails to make loops
- Bring back old sanctioned trails that have been lost to logging
 - (such as trail east of Washington Marsh)
- Create paths on side of public ways so that OHVs can connect trails without travelling on public ways
- Reopen Schoolhouse and Gorilla Trails
- Monitor trail use to avoid misuse (cutting trees, trash huge groups)
- Install speed bumps on public ways to slow down traffic
- Be mindful of MOU regarding the Appalachian Trail
- User groups should help with maintenance
- Install bridges / walkways over wet areas
- Add difficulty signage

Group B: Recommendations

- Fix Schermerhorn Road from Roaring Brook Road to Felton Pond
- Improve signs and map
- Have all users pay trail fees to provide more funds for trail maintenance
- Legalize road system for access to trails that now deade end
- Reduce speeds on public roads
- Provide more parking for all users, including possible
 - Four corners
 - East Lenox Road
 - Woodland Road
- Create loop opportunities
- Winter Use: increase trails that allow snowmobiling, grooming provides access for other non-motorized users
- Create more hiking trails
- Fix bridges on Washington Mountain Road

Group C: Recommendations

- Fix Schermerhorn Road
- Increase non-motorized trails / loops
- Create a loop with Roaring Brook Trail
- Upgrade maps
- Improve signage
- Make it easier to volunteer with DCR
- Increase hiking trails
- Fix bridges on Washington Mountain Road
- Maintain and restore views, including:
 - Anderson view on Schermerhorn Road
 - View at fountain
- Create a “grand loop” non-motorized trail at the forest
- Evaluate all single-track trails for acceptance and keep best ones

Group D: Recommendations

- Fix Schermerhorn Road
- Increase parking, including at
 - Becket Road
 - Bottom of Schermerhorn Road
- Connect Appalachian Trail to Brooker Hill Road / McNerney Road (Highlands Footpath)
- Improve road from Farnham Reservoir
- Connect motorized trail segments
- More use of October Mountain Reservoir, camping? Trail?
- Consider possible informal camping / shelters
- Provide more historic story / interpretation / wayside display
- Improve (“soft”) signage
- Consider a visitor center / camping / fee area in the center of the forest
- Consider a digital kiosk near the comfort station
- Develop a “report it” app
- Use forest management to enhance habitat

Appendix F

Draft Scope of Services for OHV Trail Planning Consultant

DCR seeks the services of a professional trail planning consultant with specific experience and expertise in planning, designing, managing and maintaining successful and sustainable Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) recreational trail systems to help develop an OHV Management Plan for Pittsfield and October Mountain State Forests.

Specifically, we would expect the consultant to familiarize themselves with the OHV Trail Systems and use at these two DCR facilities, interview appropriate DCR staff and develop a Management Plan that can serve as the basis for successful and sustainable management of these motorized trail systems. Sustainable management implies that the trail systems can be economic, ecological and social sustained over the long term.

Outline of the Management Plan:

The final Management Plan for Pittsfield and October Mountain State Forests should include:

- Brief overviews and lessons learned from other successful OHV Trail Systems in the Northeast that can serve as Case Studies for Massachusetts.
- Recommended additional trail system enhancements (new trail connections, re-routes, closures, etc.) that would improve the user experience and reduce management and maintenance costs.
- Identification of recommended contract specifications, drawings, methods and potential contractors for efficiently and effectively building sustainable OHV trails.
- Identification of minimum realistic (given anticipated available resources) on-going staffing and equipment needs to manage and maintain these trails systems.
- Cost estimates for trail enhancements and on-going management and maintenance.
- Revenue sources to cover the costs of trail system enhancements, management and maintenance, including but not limited to grants, user fees, registration fees, DCR capital funds, DCR operating funds, public-private partnerships, concessions, volunteers and in-kind services.
- Recommended management model for Massachusetts.

Appendix F

DCR's Volunteers in Parks Program

There are countless volunteer opportunities at DCR parks. In addition, DCR recognizes that volunteers often seek out these opportunities as individuals, as members of Nonprofit Organizations, or other types of community, corporate, educational, recreational, and civic organizations. However you volunteer, we are grateful for your service and appreciate your time.

To learn more about volunteering or proposing volunteer projects on DCR property, you should take moment to review our [Volunteers in Parks Program Guide](http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dcr/get-involved/volunteer-ops/dcr-volunteer-in-parks-program-guide.html) (<http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dcr/get-involved/volunteer-ops/dcr-volunteer-in-parks-program-guide.html>). This guide provides all the information you should need to understand the process and well as the Agency's expectations and standards.

The Volunteer Stewardship Role:

As a part of DCR's Volunteers in Parks Program, a volunteer is an individual who, under the direction of Department staff or as a member of a Nonprofit Organization or other types of community, corporate, educational, and civic organizations performs services that assist in the accomplishment of DCR's mission.

Volunteers contribute in many ways and perform a variety of duties that not only assist our staff, but enhance our resources and services. In addition, volunteer activities can often involve individual and/or small group projects as well as larger-scale efforts involving a greater number of volunteers.

Some of the most common volunteer stewardship activities are:

- General clean-ups of an area, including litter and refuse removal.
- Assisting DCR staff with educational programs or events.
- Removing invasive plant species.
- Researching historical or scientific information regarding park resources or property.
- Maintaining a park's recycling center; sorting recyclable materials from non-recyclable materials.
- Planting flowers, trees or shrubs to enhance landscaping, create habitat or otherwise enhance a DCR property or facility.
- Performing minor trimming or weeding with hand tools.
- **Performing trail maintenance activities with hand tools such as removing fallen limbs, trimming brush, and maintaining drainage structures, creating steps, re-blazing existing trails, and maintaining existing bog bridges.**
- Organizing activities or events intended to promote public awareness and appreciation for park resources.

For the protection of our volunteers and the Commonwealth, the following provisions must be observed by volunteers:

- Volunteers may not operate state-owned vehicles, including pick-up trucks, golf carts, or other vehicles. However, volunteers may ride as passengers in state vehicles only while performing assigned duties or services.
- Although volunteers may not operate state-owned power equipment, volunteers may use and operate personal or Nonprofit Organization-owned power equipment (such as chainsaws) when conducting stewardship activities when these activities have been authorized by DCR in a Volunteer/Stewardship Agreement Form.
- Volunteers may not collect parking fees, camping fees, or other revenue from the public, including disbursement of park funds to the public or other volunteers.
- Volunteers may not wear DCR uniforms or represent themselves as DCR employees.
- Volunteers may not engage in any duty or activity that may be considered direct enforcement of park rules or regulations or other state regulation or law. Volunteers should report any enforcement concerns or issues to park staff.

The First Step: The Volunteer/Stewardship Agreement Form

The first step in the process is the Volunteer/Stewardship Agreement Form (VSA). The VSA Form ensures that DCR staff and the volunteer or sponsoring organization have a clear and common understanding of the scale, scope, and timing of the proposed stewardship activity.

Organizations or volunteers that perform stewardship activities throughout the course of the year may also propose and request approval of these ongoing activities under a single VSA Form. The VSA Form can be completed electronically and submitted via email. We strongly encourage you to complete and submit VSA Forms electronically. VSA Forms must be submitted to the Facility Supervisor or manager of the property where you would like to conduct a stewardship activity.

To access a copy of the VSA Form, please visit our website at <http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dcr/volunteer/volunteerstewardship-agreement.docx>. Please also see a Sample VSA below.

To ensure adequate coordination between DCR and the project proponent, VSA Forms that propose only stewardship activities must be submitted to DCR at least 14 days prior to the proposed date of a volunteer activity. The Agency may waive the 14-day requirement in the case of Common Volunteer Activities. In cases involving stewardship activities in sensitive or regulated areas requiring state or local environmental permits or reviews by other DCR bureaus or divisions, project proponents should consult early with DCR staff to determine how far in advance to submit their VSA Form to ensure ample time to complete these permitting and review processes. As owner and steward of its properties, DCR staff will work with the project proponent to accomplish these tasks.

SAMPLE for illustrative purposes only:

Department of Conservation and Recreation Volunteer/Stewardship Agreement Form

INSTRUCTIONS

DCR's VSA Form is expected to serve as the primary vehicle for proposing volunteer activities on DCR property pursuant to [DCR's Volunteers in Parks Program Guide: Guidelines, Requirements, & Standards](#). Before completing this form, we encourage you to visit our website and review this guide.

If approved, the VSA Form will serve as an agreement between DCR and the project/event proponent and will act as documentation of DCR's approval of a volunteer activity. The VSA Form may be used to propose a single volunteer activity or several volunteer activities. Nonprofit Organizations may also use this form to propose and request DCR co-sponsorship of volunteer stewardship or fundraising/special event activities.

Please complete all applicable fields on this form to the best of your ability so we can assist you in having a successful volunteer experience. Attach any additional relevant information (such as maps, diagrams, schedules, etc.) that will be helpful in DCR's review.

This form may be filled out on your computer. We strongly encourage you to do so and to send a copy of your completed VSA Form via email to the Facility Supervisor or manager of a property where you would like to conduct a volunteer activity.

If your VSA Form proposes volunteer stewardship activities that do not include any fundraising/special events, please submit your completed form to the DCR Facility Supervisor or manager at least **14 days** prior to the proposed date of your volunteer stewardship activity.

If your form includes any fundraising/special event activities, please submit your completed form to the DCR Facility Supervisor or manager at least **45 days** prior to the proposed event date(s).

There is no fee for submitting this form to DCR for review and consideration. If any of the information on this form changes, please notify DCR as soon as possible.

PART A - APPLICANT / ORGANIZATIONAL CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: President, Snowmobile Club Phone: 413-***-****
Address: P.O. Box ## Cell: _____
In the Berkshires, MA Email: BerkshireSled@Gmail.com

Organization Information (if applicable)

Name of Organization: A Berkshire Snowmobile Club
Director/President's Name: President
Organization Website: None
Organization Address: -See above
Phone: -See above

☐ Yes ☒ No

(Double-click on box, choose "checked," then click OK)

Please indicate by checking "Yes" or "No" if your organization is a Nonprofit Organization that is either: a registered 501(c)(3); or a non-for-profit organization that services a public benefit and is operated primarily for charitable, civic, educational, religious, welfare, or health purposes.

Please note that if you checked "No" above, DCR strongly encourages that you refer to Section VIII of [DCR's Volunteers in Parks Program Guide: Guidelines, Requirements, & Standards](#) for additional information.

PART B - VOLUNTEER ACTIVITY INFORMATION

Activity Detailed Description (Include any information describing anticipated goals, outcomes, or benefits. Note any known regulatory requirements and/or permits needed to perform the proposed activity. Note whether the proposed activities are related/pursuant to an existing MOA with DCR. Attach any site set-up maps, route maps, road or lane closures, etc. to assist in DCR's review. If proposing a fundraising/special event, please answer Part C below):

The Club proposes the following trail maintenance activities for the coming Fall and Winter season:

- 1) We will install temporary trail directional, caution, bridge ahead, hill ahead, and stop signage at the locations shown on the attached map.
- 2) We will walk and trim vegetation (not cutting any whole trees, but only trimming branches) to maintain a clear trail width of 5-feet or 8-feet depending on the trail. Specific trails and trail trimming widths are labeled on the attached map.
- 3) Using hand bow-saws, we will cut any blowdowns or other large woody debris that has blocked the trail. If we find any larger blowdowns that require a chainsaw, we will contact DCR staff with the exact location and size.
- 4) We will groom, using club groomers, trails shown on the attached map.

At this time, we are not proposing to use any power equipment or motorized vehicles on DCR property, EXCEPT club's Ski Doo Scandic and Artic Cat Bearcat groomers.

At this time we are not proposed to re-deck any bridges, build any bridges, create any trail re-routes or conduct any other activity that might be subject to Conservation Commission review or DCR Trail Proposal Form review.

Note: Certain activities may require additional environmental permits from state agencies (such as the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program) or local conservation commissions or may require review by appropriate DCR divisions or bureaus.

Location(s) (Name all DCR properties where activities are proposed to take place. You may attach any relevant maps to assist DCR in its review):

This proposed activity will take place only at October Mountain State Forest, and we have provided a map showing detailed locations or sign installation, trail trimming, and trail grooming.

Timeframe

If the proposed volunteer activity is intended to occur on specific dates and times please complete the chart below:

We expect to complete the proposed activities in the following dates

Date(s)	Set-up Time	Activity Start Time	Activity End Time	Clean-up End Time
Oct 7 – signs and trimming, Trailhead #1	NA	9 a.m.	3 p.m.	NA
Oct 14 – signs and trimming Trailhead #2	NA	9 a.m.	3 p.m.	NA
Various depending on snow storms. Grooming	NA	3 p.m.	5 p.m.	NA

If the proposed activity is seasonal or on-going in nature, please use the space below to describe the approximate time of year, number of weeks, months, and/or days anticipated to perform the activity during the course of the year:

Grooming will on-going and will occur following snow storms (provided a base of at least 4" of snow) during the winter.

Tools & Equipment *(Please list any tools or equipment that will be used or set-up during the activity. This might include items such as power tools, portable toilets, tents, stages, vehicles, food service equipment, etc.):*

We will use hammers, sledge hammers, bow saws, crosscut saws, loppers, and hand pruners. At this time, we are not proposing to use any power equipment or motorized vehicles on DCR property, EXCEPT club's Ski Doo Scandic and Artic Cat Bearcat groomers.

Note: Individuals operating certain power tools, such as chainsaws, may need evidence of training certification depending upon project scope.

Note: Set-up and use of certain equipment such as tents, stages, and food service equipment may require permits from state or local public health or public safety agencies.

Regulatory/Permitting or Training Certifications *(Please list any known regulatory or permitting certifications or training certifications you or your volunteers might need in order to perform the proposed activities):*

We do not believe any are needed.

Utilities, Equipment, & Facility Requests *(Please list anything you are requesting that DCR provide. This might include equipment like trash receptacles/bags, gloves, use of restrooms, use of electricity, etc.):*

None

Participant Estimates:

Approximate Number of
Volunteers:

15

Approximate Number of Spectators or Event-goers *(if applicable):*

0

Refreshment / Food Service *(If applicable, please use the space below to describe any refreshments or food you plan to serve and any food vendors or caterers you plan to utilize for food service):*

All volunteers will bring their own water and snacks.

Note: Service of food prepared on-site may require evidence of a permit from a local public health or safety agency.

PART D - APPLICANT CERTIFICATION

- By checking this box, I, the below-named applicant, hereby certify that I have reviewed, understand, and agree to abide by the provisions in [DCR's Volunteers in Parks Program: Guidelines, Requirements, & Standards](#) and that the foregoing information accurately reflects the nature, scope, and extent of the volunteer activities and/or fundraising / special event activities proposed. I also understand that DCR may require additional conditions as outlined in the following section and that this agreement does not take effect until the appropriate DCR staff member signs in the appropriate place below.
- ☐

Type Your Name: _____ Name _____
Title (if applicable): _____ President _____
Organization (if applicable): _____ Snowmobile Club _____

PART E - DCR SIGNATURE

The proposed volunteer activities contained in this agreement have been reviewed and are:

- ☐ Approved with no additional comments or conditions
☐ Approved with the following additional conditions

Signed by DCR

This agreement shall be valid beginning on the date indicated below and shall be valid through:

(Month / Day / Year)

(Signature)

(Date)

(Print Name)

(Title)

October Mountain State Forest Trail Plan

Existing Trail System



October Mountain State Forest Trail Plan

Proposed Trail System Changes



Pittsfield State Forest Trails Plan

Existing Trail System

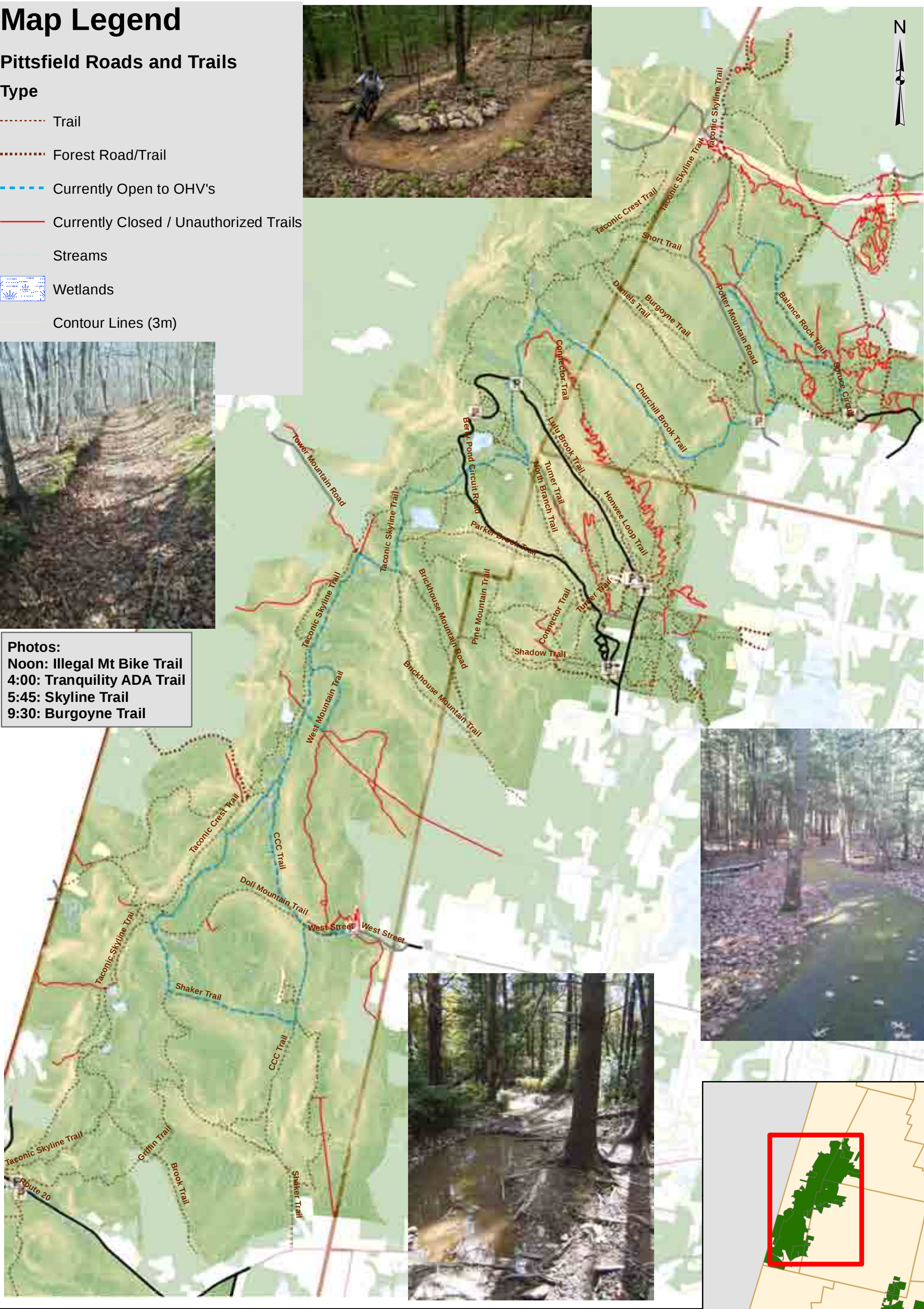
Map Legend

Pittsfield Roads and Trails

- Type
- Trail
 - Forest Road/Trail
 - Currently Open to OHV's
 - Currently Closed / Unauthorized Trails
 - Streams
 - Wetlands
 - Contour Lines (3m)



Photos:
Noon: Illegal Mt Bike Trail
4:00: Tranquility ADA Trail
5:45: Skyline Trail
9:30: Burgoyne Trail



0 0.35 0.7 1.4 2.1 2.8 Miles

Map created by DCR Greenways and Trails Program
Data from MassGIS and DCR Road and Trail Inventory
Boundary lines are approximate

Pittsfield State Forest Trails Plan

Proposed Trail System Changes

Map Legend

Pittsfield Roads and Trails

Type

- Trail
- Forest Road/Trail
- Recommended - Open to OHVs
- Recommended - Authorize as Legal
- Recommended - Closures
- Recommended - Potential New Trail
- Streams
- Wetlands

Contour Lines (3m)



Photos:
Noon: Example Trail Closure
4:00: Sample Paved Path Repairs
5:45: Completed Skyline Repairs
9:30: Sample Trail Signage



0 0.35 0.7 1.4 2.1 2.8 Miles

Map created by DCR Greenways and Trails Program
Data from MassGIS and DCR Road and Trail Inventory
Boundary lines are approximate