



New boardwalk at Beaver Brook North, constructed by the Friends of Beaver Brook Reservation (Pressley Associates, 2009)

Beaver Brook Reservation Resource Management Plan Addendum January 2010

This update is intended to supplement the Beaver Brook Reservation Resource Management Plan (RMP). A number of significant changes and activities have occurred during the three years following the public meeting hosted by DCR and Pressley Associates at Massachusetts Audubon's Habitat Education Center in May 2006. The following information has been gathered for an addendum to the RMP.

Western Greenway

Beaver Brook Reservation was the first reservation in the Metropolitan Park System, established in 1893 as a direct result of the long-term vision of Charles Elliot and Frederick Law Olmsted. Expansion of DCR's Beaver Brook Reservation with the protection of a 254-acre portion of the former Metropolitan State Hospital property (Beaver Brook North), in combination with municipal and nonprofit conservation efforts has resulted in a spectacular western anchor for the Emerald Necklace. There have been several significant additions and initiatives for the Western Greenway during the past three years.

Volunteers: Friends of Beaver Brook Reservation is a group of volunteers who have come together to work with DCR and local communities to provide stewardship support to maintain the Beaver Brook Reservation as a natural preserve open to

the public. Membership has come from a diversity of organizations including Friends of Rock Meadow, Waltham Land Trust, Mass Audubon, Lexington Conservation Stewards, Citizens for Lexington Conservation, the New England Mountain Bike Association (NEMBA) and Friends of the Western Greenway, volunteers organized under the umbrella of the Waltham Land Trust.

Lot 1 in Lexington: This 47.5-acre parcel was part of the former Middlesex County Hospital and connects with the Beaver Brook North parcel across Walnut Street in Lexington. In July 2008, Governor Patrick signed legislation to transfer ownership of Lot 1 to DCR. Lot 1, Beaver Brook North, and the historic Beaver Brook Reservation together comprise DCR's expanded Beaver Brook Reservation.

Proposed golf course in Waltham: The 55-acre site was part of the former Metropolitan State Hospital property. In 2006, at the request of the City, DCR administered an environmental assessment of the property. The report concluded that development of a golf course would jeopardize an important ecosystem and indicated the area was better suited for inclusion with the conservation and recreation lands of the Western Greenway. Based on that assessment, in August 2008 Governor Patrick vetoed legislation that would

have allowed Waltham to offer a 99-year lease to a private developer to build a 9-hole golf course. Permanent protection of the site, as City of Waltham conservation land with a conservation restriction held by DCR, was thus ensured.

Belmont–McLean Open Space: The McLean Land Management Committee, organized within the Town of Belmont, has prepared a management plan for this 100+ acre conservation area. The area was protected via a Memorandum of Agreement between McLean Hospital and the Town of Belmont and adds significantly to the continuity of the Western Greenway.

Trail Connections: The McLean Conservation Land will provide trail connections to the historic Beaver Brook Reservation, Belmont's Rock Meadow Conservation Area and Massachusetts Audubon's Habitat Sanctuary. Replacement of a wooden bridge connecting the Rock Meadow Conservation Area with Beaver Brook North was accomplished by a cooperative volunteer effort of the volunteer organizations listed in the first section above. Materials were funded through a Recreational Trails Grant Program grant obtained by the Town of Belmont. A new trail from the Parkway to Walnut Street to connect with Lot 1 has been completed. Materials for the construction of a 560-foot boardwalk were funded by a Recreational Trails Program Grant obtained by NEMBA. NEMBA and the Friends of the Western Greenway coordinated the volunteer effort.

Site Remediation

MetFenn Cemetery: The MetFenn Cemetery on the former Metropolitan State Hospital property was damaged by construction activity. Under the guidance of DCR's Office of Cultural Resources, the cemetery and surrounding stone walls have been stabilized and the damage remediated. A preservation / maintenance plan has been prepared by DCR staff.

Building Demolition: Several buildings associated with the former Metropolitan State Hospital in DCR's Beaver Brook North have been demolished. These include the garage, power plant / boiler room, incinerator, mortuary / laboratory, and the Furcolo Building. Important follow-ups include establishment of native meadow vegetation and ensuring that trail connections are established.

Dump Site Remediation: The debris has been removed from a former dump site in DCR's Beaver Brook North. This provides an opportunity to allow reestablishment of native wetlands habitat. An important follow-up is monitoring and remediation related to invasive species.

AvalonBay Support: Removal of former tennis courts and establishment of new public basketball court, and installation of new Reservation signs.

Visitor Surveys

UMass students working under the guidelines of a DCR contract, administered visitor surveys at Beaver Brook Reservation in August 2008. Surveys were completed for just over 100 individuals. More than 20% of responders indicated that this was their first visit to the Reservation, and over 80% had visited for the first time at some point in the past decade. The results provide an initial indication of increasing use, but ongoing surveys would be required to assess trends in visitor use.

Approximately half of the responders travelled to the Reservation by foot, bike or using public transportation. This provides an initial indication of the popularity of the facility as a local destination for residents of surrounding communities.

Public Participation Process 2009 – 2010

In accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 21: Section 2F, the Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the expanded Beaver Brook Reservation was developed in conjunction with a public participation process to ensure that partners and stakeholders had an opportunity to review the draft plan and provide input. Public meetings and associated public participation that occurred in 2006 is described in the Executive Summary and Appendix D of the full RMP. The following is a description of the 2009 public process associated with review of the final draft RMP and a facilitated discussion with partners.

On October 26, 2009 a notice for a public meeting was published in the Environmental Monitor and was also distributed to partners and stakeholders, and posted in the city and town halls and libraries. Public review copies of the final draft plan were distributed to town and city departments and commissions, and libraries. The final draft RMP was also posted on the Department of Conservation and Recreation RMP webpage.

The public meeting was held on November 17, 2009 at the Massachusetts Audubon Society's Habitat Education Center in Belmont. The findings and recommendations of the final draft RMP were reviewed, and all attendees participated in a facilitated discussion for three categories of recommendations identified as attainable with current operations resources and partner support: trails management, environmental education and resource stewardship.

The ideas and comments gathered from the public meeting were combined with a summary of DCR's operations capabilities to develop a Stewardship Action Plan, which is intended to guide implementation of the RMP through 2011. The draft Action Plan was distributed on December 22, 2009 to public meeting participants, partners, stakeholders, and to Waltham, Belmont and Lexington municipal officials with a requested response date of January 8, 2010.

Comments received as a result of the 11/17/09 public meeting outreach:

- Rob Forney, 11/6 by email. Mountain biking advocate, volunteer support.
- Walter Kittredge, 11/10 by email. What are the plans for documenting biodiversity?
- Seth Green, 11/16 by email. Mountain biking advocate.
- Jamie Vinsant, 11/16 by email. Recommending establishment of a disc golf course.

Comments received in response to distribution of the draft Stewardship Action Plan:

- Richard Howick, 1/4 by email. Info and recommendations for MetFern Cemetery.
- Lauren Meier, 1/4 by email. Reservation title confusion, coordination with Waltham, trails, meadow management.
- Jane Baker, 1/6 by email. Dog walking advocate.

- Mike Tabaczynski, 1/7 by email. Reservation title confusion, Lot 1 recognition, responsibility for clearing downed trees, former Administration Building reuse, OHV control, concern regarding squatters.
- Patricia Petow, 1/7 by email. Dog walking advocate.
- Heidi Ricci – Mass Audubon, 1/8 by email. Reservation title confusion, signs needed for new parcels, kiosks needed, OHV enforcement, trails planning, environmental education.
- Peter Crimmin, 1/8 by email. Dog walking advocate.
- Mary Sullivan, 1/8 by email. Dog walking advocate.
- Waltham Mayor Jeanette McCarthy, 1/8 by email. City will comply with Met State Reuse Plan.
- Waltham Planning Director Ron Vokey, 1/8 by USPS mail. Recognizes importance of former Administration area related to public access. Reuse of Admin Building too costly to undertake at this time.

The results of the public process serve as an important reminder that communication and coordination between DCR and our Western Greenway partners is essential for the long-term stewardship of the Reservation.

Beaver Brook Reservation Management Summary & Action Plan – 2010

Guiding Principles for Stewardship

Preserve and enhance the extensive wetlands and natural communities.
Preserve the cultural resources, including cultural landscapes, archaeological sites, and historic buildings and structures.
Manage the new Beaver Brook North and Lot 1 parcels to conserve their ecological attributes and expand opportunities for passive recreation.
Coordinate with partners to integrate the DCR Reservation with the larger Western Greenway network of open spaces.

Division of Urban Parks Management Resources

The DCR Fells District Mystic Cluster is responsible for maintenance operations at the expanded Beaver Brook Reservation. Four DCR staff members are assigned to the Fells District Mystic Cluster, but there is no dedicated staff at the expanded Beaver Brook Reservation.

Recommendation:

One Long Term Seasonal Position (April – October) dedicated to Beaver Brook

Division of Urban Parks Management Activities			
Activity	Spring/Summer	Fall	Winter
Litter & trash pick-up	Daily	Twice weekly	
Bathhouse maintenance	Daily ("pool season" only)		
Playground maintenance	Weekly	Twice weekly	
Ball field maintenance	Every ten days	Every ten days	
Mowing & trimming: · Historic Beaver Brook · Metropolitan Parkway · Beaver Brook spray deck	Every three weeks	Every three weeks	
Non-motorized mowing & non-string trimming: Metfern Cemetery	Monthly	Monthly	
Graffiti removal	Monthly		
Street sweeping: Metropolitan Parkway	Twice monthly		
Mow selected fields (including new meadow on former hospital site)		Once	
Metropolitan Parkway & walkways snow removal			See DCR Winter Storm Plan
Trail system downed tree removal	As needed	As needed	

Other DCR Operational Support		
Action	DCR Unit	Interval
Catch basin maintenance	Engineering	Annually
Bathhouse roof replacement	Engineering	2010 (FY11?)
Urban Parks Trust Fund	~\$10,000	Annually

Recommended DCR Staff Stewardship Actions – 2010 to 2012		
Action	DCR Units	Funding
Install Reservation ID signage at Beaver Brook North & Lot 1	Division of Urban Parks sign shop	
Basketball court signage	Division of Urban Parks sign shop	
Interpretive signage: · Wetlands restoration · Former buildings · MetFern Cemetery · Carriage trail wayside	Planning Division of Urban Parks	Trust Fund
Install Informational kiosks	Division of Urban Parks	Trust Fund
Process partner GPS & post trail map to website	Planning External Affairs	

Recommended DCR Staff Stewardship Actions – 2010 to 2012		
Add Western Greenway http link to DCR website	External Affairs	
Update Pressley Associates brochures & post to website	Planning External Affairs	
MetFern Cemetery preservation guidelines	Planning Division of Urban Parks	
Install Shurcliff gate at cemetery	Engineering	Gates & fencing maintenance contract
Prepare structural assessment of Stearns Barn	Engineering	
Assess Duck & Mill Pond Dams	Dam Safety	

Partnered Stewardship Opportunities		
Action	DCR Units	Partners
Enhance habitat	Division of Urban Parks Planning	Mass Audubon MA Fish and Game DCR PMF Grant Program
Universal trails plan	Division of Urban Parks Planning Engineering External Affairs Recreation	Friends of the Western Greenway Friends of Beaver Brook Reserv. NEMBA Mass Audubon Town of Belmont
Establish main parking area, and initiate visitor center planning, design and funding strategies	Planning Engineering Division of Urban Parks	City of Waltham
Assess off-leash opportunities and dog management strategies	Division of Urban Parks Ranger Bureau Planning External Affairs	Friends of Beaver Brook Reserv.
Environmental education	Planning Interpretive Services Ranger Bureau External Affairs	Mass Audubon Friends of the Western Greenway Brandeis University Local schools
Volunteer Invasive species management	Division of Urban Parks Planning	Mass Audubon Friends of Beaver Brook Reserv. Town of Belmont
Boardwalk - Avalon Bay connection Maintain basketball court and multi-use pathway	Division of Urban Parks Planning Engineering	Avalon Bay
Evaluate disc golf course	Division of Urban Parks Recreation Planning	City of Waltham

