



A lone kayaker paddles West Meadow Pond at West Bridgewater State Forest. (See Appendix K for photo information.)

SECTION 11. WEST BRIDGEWATER STATE FOREST

11.1. INTRODUCTION

West Bridgewater State Forest is located in the town of West Bridgewater; south of the Brockton town line and east of Route 24. (Figure 11.1.1) It is approximately 11 miles east of F. Gilbert Hills State Forest.

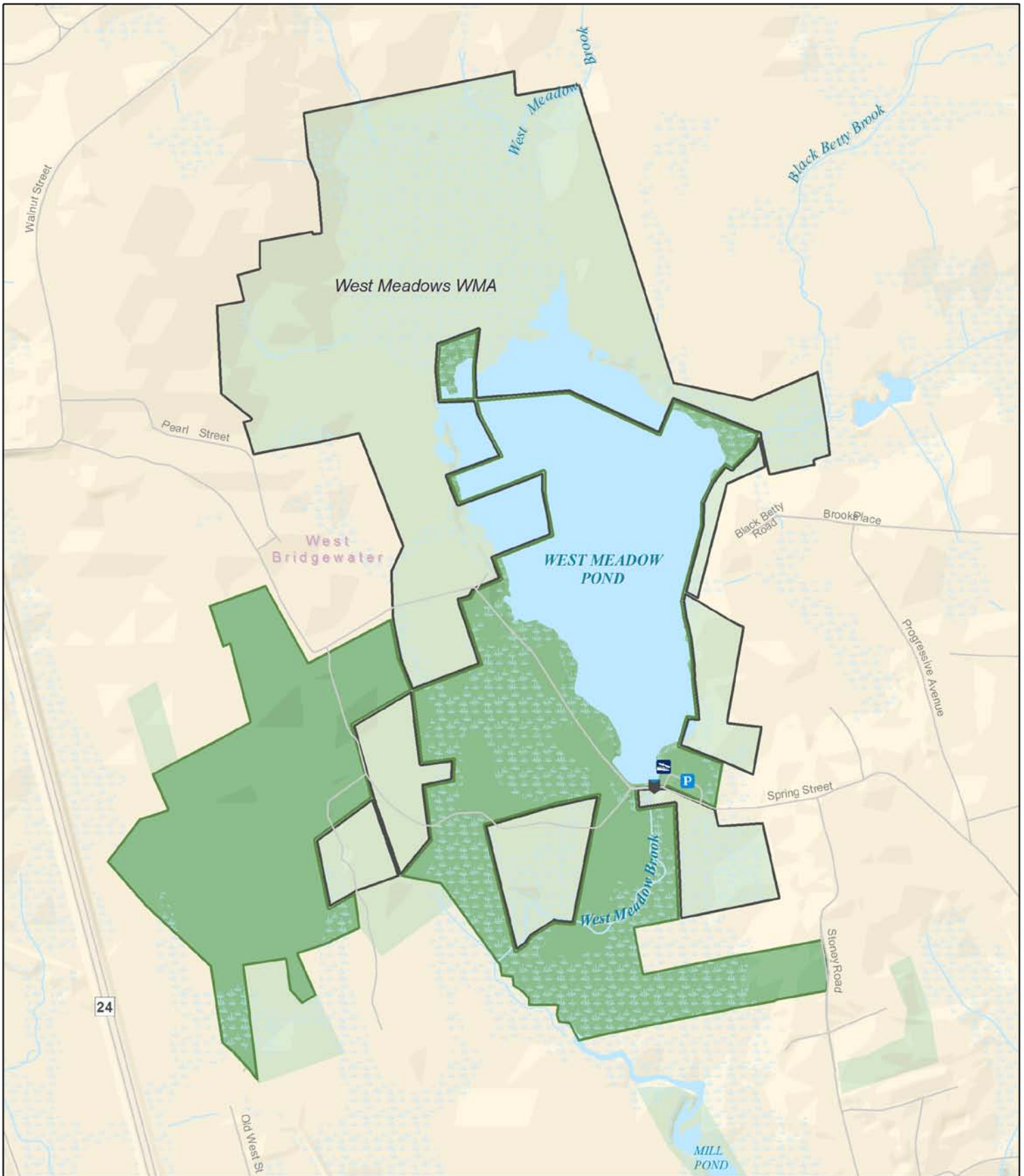
Associated with the Forest is West Meadows Wildlife Management Area (WMA). This Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (Mass Wildlife) property surrounds much of the State Forest, and portions of the WMA are inholdings within the Forest. These two properties are interconnected both physically and from a management perspective.

West Bridgewater State Forest was established by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation in the mid-1930s. At that time, the Department was the Commonwealth's forestry, parks, wildlife, and animal industry agency. In the 1950s, lands around the Forest were acquired and West Meadows WMA was created; it expanded significantly in the 1960s. During this time the Forest and WMA were jointly managed by personnel from different divisions of the same agency.

In 1975, responsibility for the management of state forests and wildlife management areas was placed under two separate agencies (i.e., the Department of Environmental Management and the Department of Fisheries, Wildlife & Recreational Vehicles, respectively). For the first time in their history, West Bridgewater State Forest and West Meadows WMA were administratively distinct. Despite this formal separation, management of these two properties remains informally linked.

West Bridgewater State Forest is not as well-known as West Meadows WMA. This is likely due to two factors. First, the term West Meadow has been used for centuries to refer to this section of West Bridgewater. Second, two of the most popular recreational activities on these properties are hunting and fishing; activities commonly associated with WMAs.

The Forest's physical, political, and regulatory attributes are summarized in Table 11.1.1.



- West Bridgewater State Forest
- West Meadows Wildlife Management Area
- Blue Hills Complex Land
- Other Protected Open Space
- DCR Legal Interest
- Boat Ramp
- Dam
- Public Parking

West Bridgewater State Forest

Figure 11.1.1

1,000
 Feet



Geographic information provided by MassGIS and DCR GIS, 2016

Table 11.1.1. Physical, political, and regulatory settings of West Bridgewater State Forest.

Setting	Name or Metric
Location:	West Bridgewater
Area (acres)^a:	245.98
Perimeter (miles)^a:	6.95
Landscape Designation(s)^b:	Parkland
Legislative Districts:	
House	10 th Plymouth
Senate	Norfolk, Bristol, and Plymouth

Regulatory Designations: Priority Habitat

- Calculated using a Geographic Information System (GIS).
- For a summary of DCR’s landscape designations, see <http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dcr/ld/ld-factsheet-final.pdf>.

Associated Properties. There is one associated property, it is not owned by DCR; it is:

- West Meadows Wildlife Management Area.** This approximately 244 acre property is contiguous with West Bridgewater State Forest. It is owned and managed by Mass Wildlife. The two properties share resources and infrastructure.

The Forest and Park Supervisor from F. Gilbert Hills State Forest manages, as time and resources permit, several DCR properties, including F. Gilbert Hills State Forest (Section 6), Bristol Blake State Reservation (Section 7), Franklin State Forest (Section 8), Wrentham State Forest (Section 9), Rehoboth State Forest (Section 10), West Bridgewater State Forest, and Bridgewater State Forest (Section 12). They also oversee the DCR’s interests in Angle Tree Monument Reservation (Section 1).

11.2. NATURAL RESOURCES

Physical Features

The Forest is irregularly shaped, with numerous straight lines and sharp angles along its borders. Mass Wildlife property fills the gaps between disjunct portions of the Forest. Elevation is approximately 90 feet at West Meadow Pond. It gently rises to the west and east, reaching maximum elevations of 108 feet near Pearl Road to the west and 118 feet along Stoney Road to the east.

Downstream of the dam, the elevation is at its lowest, 79 feet.

Water Resources

The Forest’s most notable features are its water resources, which run north to south through the Forest. More than half of the Forest’s area (56.35%) is associated with these wetlands. Waters from West Meadow Brook and Black Betty Brook enter West Meadow Pond from the north and northeast, travel southward through the pond, and exit through a spillway in West Meadow Pond Dam. These waters then flow southward through West Meadow Brook until they exit the property. These and other water resources are summarized in Table 11.2.1.

Table 11.2.1. Water resources of West Bridgewater State Forest.

Water Resource	Name or Metric
Watershed:	Taunton
Aquifer:	
Medium Yield (acres)	0.00
High Yield (acres)	0.00
Rivers and Streams (miles)^a	0.00
Vernal Pools	
Certified (#)	0
Potential (#)	2
Wetlands (acres)^b	138.62
Lakes and Ponds (acres)^b	0.10

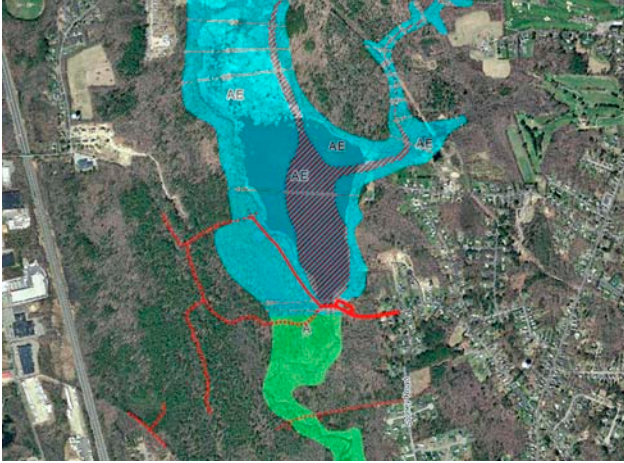
- The portion of West Meadow Brook south of West Meadow Dam is classified by MassGIS as forested wetland, and not as a linear feature. Because of this, there is no metric for the length of this section of brook.
- Nearly all of West Meadow Pond is classified as wetland by MassGIS.

Over one half of the Forest is susceptible to floods. (Table 11.2.2) Affected areas include, and are adjacent to, West Meadow Brook, Black Betty Brook, and West Meadow Pond. Infrastructure within this area includes West Meadow Pond Dam, a boat ramp, approximately one-half of the Forest’s parking lot, and approximately 0.50 miles of unpaved forest roads.

Table 11.2.2. Potential impacts of flooding to West Bridgewater State Forest.

Type of Impact	Acres	%
Flooding:		
100-year Storm	132.64	53.92
500-year Storm ^a	132.64	53.92

- Cumulative value; includes 100-year storm impacts.



Predicted flooding at West Bridgewater State Forest; the 100-year flood zone upstream of the dam is represented in blue and the 100-year flood zone downstream of the dam is represented in green. Roads are represented in red. (See Appendix K for photo information.)

Rare Species

Three state-listed species are known from West Bridgewater State Forest. (Table 11.2.3) All are birds associated with the emergent wetlands in West Meadows WMA and adjacent shallow waters of the Forest.

Table 11.2.3. State-listed species of West Bridgewater State Forest, as identified by the NHESP.

Species ^{a, b}	Type ^c	MESA ^d
Common moorhen	B	SC
King rail	B	T
Least bittern	B	E

- Presented alphabetically, by common name.
- Fact sheets are available at: <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dfg/dfw/natural-heritage/species-information-and-conservation/ mesa-list/list-of-rare-species-in-massachusetts.html>.
- Types of state-listed species include: A = Amphibian; B = Bird; I = Insect; P = Plant; and R = Reptile.
- Status of species listed under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA): E = Endangered, SC = Special Concern; and T = Threatened.



The king rail is one of three state-listed waterbirds in West Bridgewater State Forest. (See Appendix K for photo information.)

Priority Habitat

Only 13.06 acres (5.31%) of the Forest is designated Priority Habitat; it is located along the Forest’s northern boundary. Priority Habitat polygon PH 1141 is centered on a shallow marsh in West Meadow WMA; only a small portion extends into West Meadow Pond.

Vegetation

There has been no floristic inventory of this forest.

Invasive Species

The Forest’s invasive species have not been inventoried. Two species were identified on the dam during a brief site visit in November, 2015 (Table 11.2.4)

Table 11.2.4. Known invasive plants of West Bridgewater State Forest.

Species ^a	Status ^b	Source ^c
Common reed	I	1
Oriental bittersweet	I	1

- Presented alphabetically, by common name.
- Plants are classified as being either Invasive (I), Likely Invasive (L), or Potentially Invasive (P) according to MIPAG (2005).
- Information contained in this table was obtained from the following sources:
 - Incidentally observed by RMP planner.

Natural Communities

There is little information on the Forest's natural communities; only three community types, all Palustrine, have been identified. (Table 11.2.5)

Table 11.2.5. Known natural communities of West Bridgewater State Forest.

Community Type ^a	System ^b	State Rank ^c	Source ^d
Deep Emergent Marsh	P	S4	1
Red Maple Swamp	P	S5	1
Shrub Swamp	P	S5	1

- Classified according to Swain and Kearsley (2011).
- E = Estuarine, P = Palustrine, T = Terrestrial.
- The NHESP ranks communities from most rare (S1) to the most common (S5).
- Information contained in this table was obtained from the following sources:
 - DEP Wetlands (1:12,000) data layer.

The DEP Wetlands datalayer indicates the presence of "Shallow Emergent Marsh, Meadow, or Fen" throughout all of West Meadow Pond. This category could apply to multiple natural community types in the State's classification system (Swain and Kearsley 2011).

Forests

Most of the Forest is either forested wetland or emergent wetland; upland forest accounts for only 107.06 acres (43.52%). Mason (n.d.) identified the following nine "forest types:"

- White pine, with oaks and hardwoods
- Red maple
- American beech; with oak, birch, maple, and tupelo
- White pine, with scattered hardwoods
- Mature oaks and hardwoods
- White pine with larger hardwoods
- Large diameter white pine, with smaller hardwoods
- White pine overstory with hardwood sawlog and pole stand, and white pine saplings
- Oak and hardwoods in wet soils

Wildlife

The wildlife of West Bridgewater State Forest is undocumented. The wildlife of the adjacent WMA is better known and includes "aquatic furbearers, deer, raccoon, fox, rabbits, squirrel, grouse, ducks, and geese" (MassWildlife 1992). West Meadows WMA is a birding "hotspot" and as of July 2016, 133 species of birds have been recorded (www.ebird.org). This included ducks, herons, rails, and shorebirds, as well as species common to thickets and pine forests. West Meadow Pond contains shallow, warm waters; largemouth bass and pickerel are present (FBA n.d.).

11.3. CULTURAL RESOURCES

This section describes the known and potential cultural resource areas, including pre-Contact and post-Contact archaeological resources, and historic landscapes, buildings, structures, and objects. An overview of significant events in the history of West Bridgewater State Forest is presented in Table 11.3.1. Cultural Resources are identified in Table 11.3.2.

Five archaeological resources are listed by the MHC as being in or adjacent to the forest. Because the MHC does not make information on archaeological resources available to the general public, most resources are not included in Table 11.3.2.

Table 11.3.1. Significant events in the history of West Bridgewater State Forest.

Year(s)	Events
1935–1936	Department of Conservation acquires approximately 250 acres in the West Meadow area of West Bridgewater; establishing West Bridgewater State Forest.
1949–1954	Department of Conservation identifies and begins acquiring land adjacent to the Forest, establishing West Meadows WMA.
1963–1965	West Meadows WMA expands by more than 200 acres.
1964–1965	Dam and spillway replaced and existing dike expanded to create a “water control structure” to “facilitate water level manipulation” in order to develop “an impoundment for waterfowl production and management” (Bridges 1963). This water control structure is West Meadow Pond Dam (MA01072).
2010	Mass Wildlife expands West Meadows WMA by six acres.

Table 11.3.2. Cultural resources of West Bridgewater State Forest.

Location and Resource	Type ^a	Date ^b	Condition ^c	Integrity ^d	In Use ^e	Utilities ^f	MHC # ^g	Guidance ^h
Old Colony Rail Road	LA	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Additional Resourcesⁱ								
<i>Ephraim Howard Saw Mill</i>	AR	ca. 1727	-	-	-	-	-	1
<i>Ephraim Howard House</i>	AR	ca. 1742	-	-	-	-	-	1
<i>James Keith, Jr. House</i>	AR	-	-	-	-	-	-	1

- a. Resource types include the following: AR = Archaeological; BU = Building; CM = Cemetery; LA = Landscape; LHD = Local Historic District; NRHD = National Register Historic District; OB = Object; and ST = Structure.
- b. Date of construction provided, when known.
- c. Preliminary condition assessment using the building system and equipment condition codes as used in the Massachusetts Capital Asset management Information System (CAMIS). The following codes are used: 1 = Excellent-easily restorable to like new condition; 2 = Good-routine maintenance required; 3 = Adequate-some corrective and preventative maintenance required; 4 = Fair-excessive corrective maintenance and repair required; 5 = Poor-renovation needed; and 6 = Fail.
- d. Integrity is a relative assessment of the condition of a resource’s retention of its historic character-defining features; H = High; L = Low; M = Medium; and U = Unknown.
- e. Use categories include N = No, building is not in use; S = Building is used on a seasonal basis; and Y = Yes, building is in use year-round.
- f. The following codes are used to identify utilities associated with buildings: E = Electric, H = Heat; I = Internet; S = Septic system; T = Telephone; W = Water; and W(S) = Water is available on a seasonal basis. This information is included for all buildings.
- g. Massachusetts Historical Commission inventory number; does not include Historic Archaeology numbers.
- h. The following guidance is offered for the ongoing maintenance of these cultural resources:
1. Refer to Archaeological Features BMP (DCR n.d.g).
- i. Reported in Conant (n.d.), but not field verified.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Pre-Contact Resources

No archaeological surveys have been conducted in the forest, and there are no recorded pre-Contact resources documented. Eleven pre-Contact sites are recorded within a one-mile-radius of the forest and date to the Late Archaic Period (6,000 BP) through to the Woodland Period (450 BP). Records indicate that sites range from individual “find spots” to a Village Site. The forest has a high archaeological potential for pre-Contact sites and any proposed below ground impacts must be reviewed by the DCR Archaeologist.

Post-Contact Resources

There are no documented historic archaeological sites in the forest. Background research will determine if the forest is sensitive for locating historic period archaeological sites.

Conant (n.d.) identified three post-Contact resources within the Forest: the Ephraim Howard saw mill; Ephraim Howard house; and James Keith, Jr. house. None of these resources have been verified.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

The Forest is located in a section of West Bridgewater known historically as West Meadow. This meadow contained large areas of native grasses that were used in the early 18th century for the feeding of livestock. In the mid-18th century, West Meadow Brook was dammed in order to create a saw mill (Conant n.d.). During this early colonial period roadways were established throughout what is now the State Forest; the area has seen little development since. The only other cultural resource is a line of rail road track located on the western part of the forest that was installed and operated by Old Colony Rail Road.

Historic Landscapes

Old Colony Rail Road. A portion of the former Old Colony Rail Road is located between Old West Street and the southwest portion of the Forest. Approximately 400 feet of the rail road abuts the forest. The ties and rails are gone, but the graded bed remains. A similar, isolated section of rail road bed is located immediately north of West Bridgewater Town Hall approximately two miles east of the Forest.

Buildings

There are no historic buildings.

Structures

There are no historic structures.

Objects

There are no known historic objects.

11.4. RECREATION RESOURCES

Recreation at West Bridgewater State Forest is associated with either West Meadow Pond or the Forest’s roads. The following activities are known to take place:

- Bicycling, mountain
- Boating, power
- Canoeing/Kayaking
- Dog walking, on leash
- Fishing
- Geocaching (1 cache as of July, 2016)
- Hiking
- Horseback riding
- Hunting
- Nature study/Photography

The unauthorized use of OHVs is a chronic management issue that has damaged road surfaces, natural resources, and West Meadow Pond Dam.

The only recreation infrastructure is a gravel boat ramp located at the south end of West Meadow Pond. It has one lane and is considered to be in Fair condition (FBA n.d.).



Gravel boat ramp at West Meadow Pond. (See Appendix K for photo information.)

11.5. INFRASTRUCTURE

Property Boundary

The Forest, along with West Meadows WMA, constitutes a block of approximately 489.9 acres of permanently protected state-owned land. An additional 17.5 acres of municipal open space directly abuts these lands. To the northeast and southwest these conservation lands are bordered by undeveloped private lands. To the northwest and southeast is low-density residential development.

A question exists as to whether or not one or more abutters have a deeded right of way through the Forest. The deed for 0 Stoney Way (Book 2649; Page 333) identifies “a right of way to and from lot numbered 6 to the road passing through lots two (2), three (3), and four (4)” as indicated “on a plan drawn by Fred Copeland, March 29, 1864.” One abutter, who does not own the property involved, asserts that the right of way passes through the Forest along an unnamed forest road that intersects with Stoney Way. This assertion could not be verified during the preparation of this RMP. The Forest and Park Supervisor has elected to not gate this road until the issue is resolved.

Buildings and Structures

There are no buildings, and only one structure, the West Meadow Pond Dam (MA01072). (Table 11.5.1) Construction of the current dam began in November of 1964 and continued through the spring of 1965. It was formally dedicated on July 8, 1966. An earthen dam with a granite block spillway formerly occupied the same site. The new dam was higher, and its associated dikes longer, than the previous dam. This resulted in more water being impounded, expanding the area of West Meadow Pond.

Table 11.5.1. Non-historic buildings and structures of West Bridgewater State Forest.

Location and Infrastructure ^a	Date ^c	Condition ^b	In Use ^d	Utilities ^e
West Meadow Pond Dam (MA01072)	1965	5	-	-

- Geographic sub-regions as identified in DCR (2011).
- Preliminary condition assessment using the building system and equipment condition codes as used in the Massachusetts Capital Asset Management Information System (CAMIS). The following codes are used: 1 = Excellent-easily restorable to like new condition; 2 = Good-routine maintenance required; 3 = Adequate-some corrective and preventative maintenance required; 4 = Fair-excessive corrective maintenance and repair required; 5 = Poor-renovation needed; and 6 = Fail.
- Date of construction provided, when known.
- Use categories include N = No, building is not in use; S = Building is used on a seasonal basis; and Y = Yes, building is in use year-round.
- The following codes are used to identify utilities associated with buildings: E = Electric, H = Heat; I = Internet; S = Septic system; T = Telephone; W = Water; and W(S) = Water is available on a seasonal basis. This information is included for all buildings.

The dam is classified as an Intermediate sized dam, with a Significant Hazard Potential, in Poor condition. The most recent Phase 1 Inspection/Evaluation report identified 12 deficiencies and recommended seven studies and analyses, three recurring maintenance activities, five minor repairs, and four remedial modifications to the dam (GZA GeoEnvironmental, Inc. 2011b). Among the deficiencies were: problems with the right abutment; eroded areas; bush and tree growth; standing water across the toe of the dam; standing water across submerged stop logs; deterioration of the spillway; emergent aquatic vegetation obstructing the upstream left side of the spillway; and corrosion/deterioration of the outlet pipe. Follow-up inspections/evaluations restated the deficiencies, recommended implementation of previously identified recommendations, and added a recommendation for continued six-month follow-up inspections of the dam (GZA GeoEnvironmental, Inc. 2012). Vegetation management practices intended to reduce illegal use of OHVs has contributed to these deficiencies. (See Section 11.8, below.)

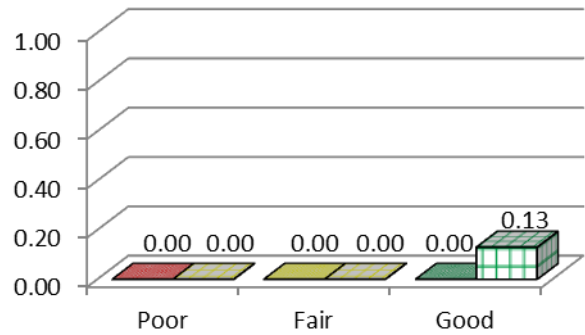


Spillway of West Meadow Pond Dam; the vegetation along the dam is visible to both sides of the spillway. (See Appendix K for photo information.)

Roads

The Forest’s only public road passes through the parking area. Its length and condition are identified in Figure 11.5.1. There are no administrative roads. Forest roads, which are classified as trails, are discussed elsewhere in this section.

Figure 11.5.1. Condition and length (in miles) of roads at West Bridgewater State Forest.



Largely overgrown, Spring Street serves as the main pathway for the Forest’s hikers and mountain bikers. (See Appendix K for photo information.)

Parking

There is one formal parking area; it is located off Spring Street, on the east side of the Forest. (Table 11.5.2) This lot is used for visitors to the State Forest and West Meadow WMA, including vehicles associated with the adjacent boat ramp. The Office of Fishing and Boating Access indicates the lot’s capacity as 20 vehicles with trailers (FBA n.d.); this does not reflect actual conditions

Table 11.5.2. Number of public parking spaces, by location and type, at West Bridgewater State Forest.^a

Location	HP	Restricted	Other	Total
Spring Street	0	0	9	9
Total	0	0	9	9

a. Based on 24-foot parallel parking spaces.

The parking area was constructed in 1964 and 1965, along with the dam reconstruction, using Federal-aid Accelerated Public Works funds (Bridges 1963, Anonymous 1964). At that time, specifications called for a 200 x 100 foot parking lot “in the field at the east end of the dam” (Anonymous 1964). It is unclear if the parking area ever reached these dimensions.



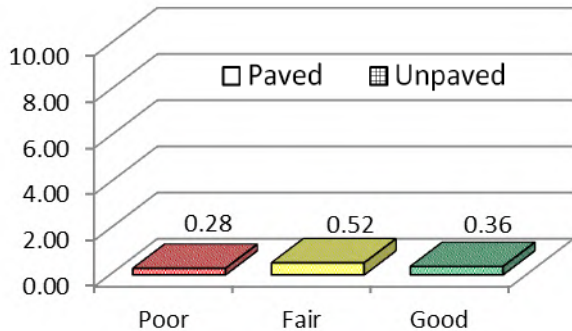
This gravel lot off Spring Street is the Forest’s only parking area. (See Appendix K for photo information.)

There is parking for two vehicles off Stoney Road, to the south of the Forest’s Main Identification Sign. There is no formal lot at this location.

Trails

There are 1.16 miles of official trails; and 0.67 miles of user-created trails. The condition and extent of official trails are presented in Table 11.5.4.

Figure 11.5.2. Condition and length (in miles) of official trails at West Bridgewater State Forest.



Forest roads are the primary travel corridors and serve as the trail system. The longest trail segment follows a portion of Spring Street; a road that once

extended from downtown West Bridgewater to a point near where Walnut Street crosses Route 24 (Conant n.d.). The Forest’s creation resulted in this segment being closed to the public. Other forest roads that once provided local landowner access are also elements of the trails system. All are officially closed to vehicles, but unauthorized four-wheel-drive vehicle and OHV use is common. This illegal use has damaged the trails’ surfaces.

Kiosks and Signs

A Main Identification Sign is located along Stoney Road, near the Forest’s southern boundary. There is no sign at the Forest’s main entrance (i.e., Spring Street) or parking area to identify the property as a State Forest or to identify regulations.



Main entrance sign along Stoney Road, West Bridgewater. (See Appendix K for photo information.)

Iron Ranger

There is no iron ranger.

Memorials and Markers

A memorial to Alex Gureckis, a sportsman from West Bridgewater, was created in 2015 on the downslope of West Meadow Dam, to the west of the spillway. This portion of the dam is owned by Mass Wildlife. The memorial consists of a granite marker and an ornamental garden surrounded by a ring of stones. During a November 2015 site visit, a pumpkin, artificial flowers, and a mylar balloon were also present. Neither the DCR nor Mass Wildlife authorized creation of this memorial.



The marker is part of an unauthorized memorial located on the dam's downslope. (See Appendix K for photo information.)

11.6. INTERPRETATION

There is no regular interpretive programming, and there are no interpretive panels.

11.7. MANAGEMENT RESOURCES

Staffing

DCR Personnel

This property is unstaffed. The Forest and Park Supervisor from F. Gilbert Hills is responsible for the operation and maintenance of this Forest.

Partnerships and Volunteers

DCR and Mass Wildlife employees work cooperatively to manage the joint Forest and WMA. There are no other partnerships or ongoing volunteer efforts.

Safety

The West Bridgewater Fire Department provides fire response and emergency services. Additional support is provided by Fire District 2 personnel based at Myles Standish State Forest. The West Bridgewater Police Department, Massachusetts State Police (Station D-4, Middleborough), and the Massachusetts Environmental Police (Region C-7) provide law enforcement.

Funding

Conservation Trust Fund

There are no Conservation Trust Fund revenues dedicated to West Bridgewater State Forest.

Retained Revenue

The Forest does not generate or retain revenue.

Other Revenues

There are no other revenues.

11.8. MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Management of DCR properties is guided by a variety of regulations, policies, BMPs, legal agreements, and institutional knowledge. This section describes those practices unique to the management of West Bridgewater State Forest. No key legal agreements were identified for this property. The cooperative management of the Forest and WMA by DCR and Mass Wildlife takes place without a formal agreement. (See *Section 11.1. Introduction*, for an overview of the history of management.)

No key legal agreements were identified for this property. Key planning documents are identified in Table 11.8.1.

Table 11.8.1. Key management and guidance documents for Bridgewater State Forest.

Author and Document	Year
GZA GeoEnvironmental, Inc. West Meadow Pond Dam. Follow-up inspection/evaluation report.	2012 ^b

Annual Maintenance

There are no regular activities; all maintenance is performed on an as needed basis.

Natural Resources

Water Resources

The DCR Office of Dam Safety identifies the DCR as the owner and operator of the dam. As such, it is responsible for regulating the water level in West Meadow Pond. Mass Wildlife may also regulate the water level. Occasionally, members of the public remove stop logs resulting in changes to the water level.

Rare Species

There are no rare species monitoring or management activities.

Invasive Species

There is no monitoring or management of invasive plants.

Vegetation

There are no CFI plots.

A Timber Stand Improvement (TSI) cut was performed in 1977 on a 10.3 acre stand of white pine off Stoney Road (Mason n.d.). It is unknown if additional TSI cuts or harvests have been conducted since.

Frequent illegal use of OHVs has resulted in erosion of soils at the crest of the dam. Efforts to block OHV access to the dam resulted in OHVs riding through the pond shore and adjacent pond. When this occurred, property managers made the deliberate decision to let vegetation along the dam grow, so that it would form a barrier to OHVs. Although this approach to vegetation management has limited OHV access to the dam, it has also resulted in deficiencies to the dam's condition.



Road across West Meadow Pond Dam; note the extent of vegetation to both the downstream (left) and pond (right) sides of the dam. (See Appendix K for photo information.)

Wildlife

Under DCR's Forest and Park Regulations (302 CMR 12.11), fishing and hunting are allowed in the forest.

Mass Wildlife does not stock fish in West Meadow Pond; waterfowl are banded every few years (Zimmer 2015).

Cultural Resources

There are no management practices unique to this forest.

Recreation Resources

According to the Office of Fishing and Boating Access, the boat ramp is maintained by Mass Wildlife (FBA n.d.).

Infrastructure

Boundary

Historically, boundary marking was performed cooperatively with Mass Wildlife (e.g., Kenney 1958). Currently, boundary markings are maintained by the Regional Forester.

Buildings and Structures

There are no buildings to repair or maintain. The West Meadow Pond Dam is identified by DCR's Office of Dam Safety as being owned by the DCR; making its maintenance the responsibility of the agency. However, the dam is situated on both DCR and Mass Wildlife-owned parcels and was constructed by the Division of Fisheries and Game for the purposes of waterfowl production and management. Prior to its construction, maintenance responsibility for the dam was identified as follows:

"As in all wildlife development projects undertaken with Federal-aid funds, the Division of Fisheries and Game must be responsible for maintenance and operation of all roads, structures, parking areas, and clearings for wildlife habitat improvement. This commitment for maintenance is written into all Federal-aid projects" (Bridges 1963).

It is unclear how and when the DCR acquired sole responsibility for maintaining this dam.

Roads

The public road into the Forest (i.e., Spring Street) is believed to be maintained by the West Bridgewater Highway/Vehicle Maintenance Department (Zimmer 2015).

Parking Areas

The DCR and Mass Wildlife jointly maintain the parking area. Neither agency plows snow.

Trails

Within the forest and adjacent WMA, roads are jointly maintained by DCR and Mass Wildlife on an as needed basis. Neither agency plows snow.

Kiosks and Signs

The main identification sign was installed by the Forest and Park Supervisor from F. Gilbert Hills State Forest; they are responsible for its maintenance.

11.9. RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This section provides recommendations for the near- and long-term management of West Bridgewater State Forest. Applied Land Stewardship Zoning recommendations provide general guidance for managing these properties. Future activities and projects should be checked against the zoning map (Figure 11.9.1) for consistency. Management recommendations are all high-priority, and should be addressed as soon as resources become available.

**Applied Land Stewardship Zoning
(Figure 11.9.1)**

The following Land Stewardship Zoning is recommended.

Zone 1

- No sections of West Bridgewater State Forest have been designated Zone 1.

Zone 2

- All areas not specifically designated Zone 3.

Zone 3

- The existing dam, parking lot, and boat ramp area.

Significant Feature Overlay

There is no Significant Feature Overlay.

Management Recommendations

Four priority management recommendations were developed for Bridgewater State Forest. (Table 11.9.1) For a recommendation to be considered priority it must address one or more of the following criteria:

- Regulatory compliance or compliance with legal agreements.
- Threats to the health and safety of park visitors and employees.
- The imminent loss of a natural, cultural, or recreation resource.

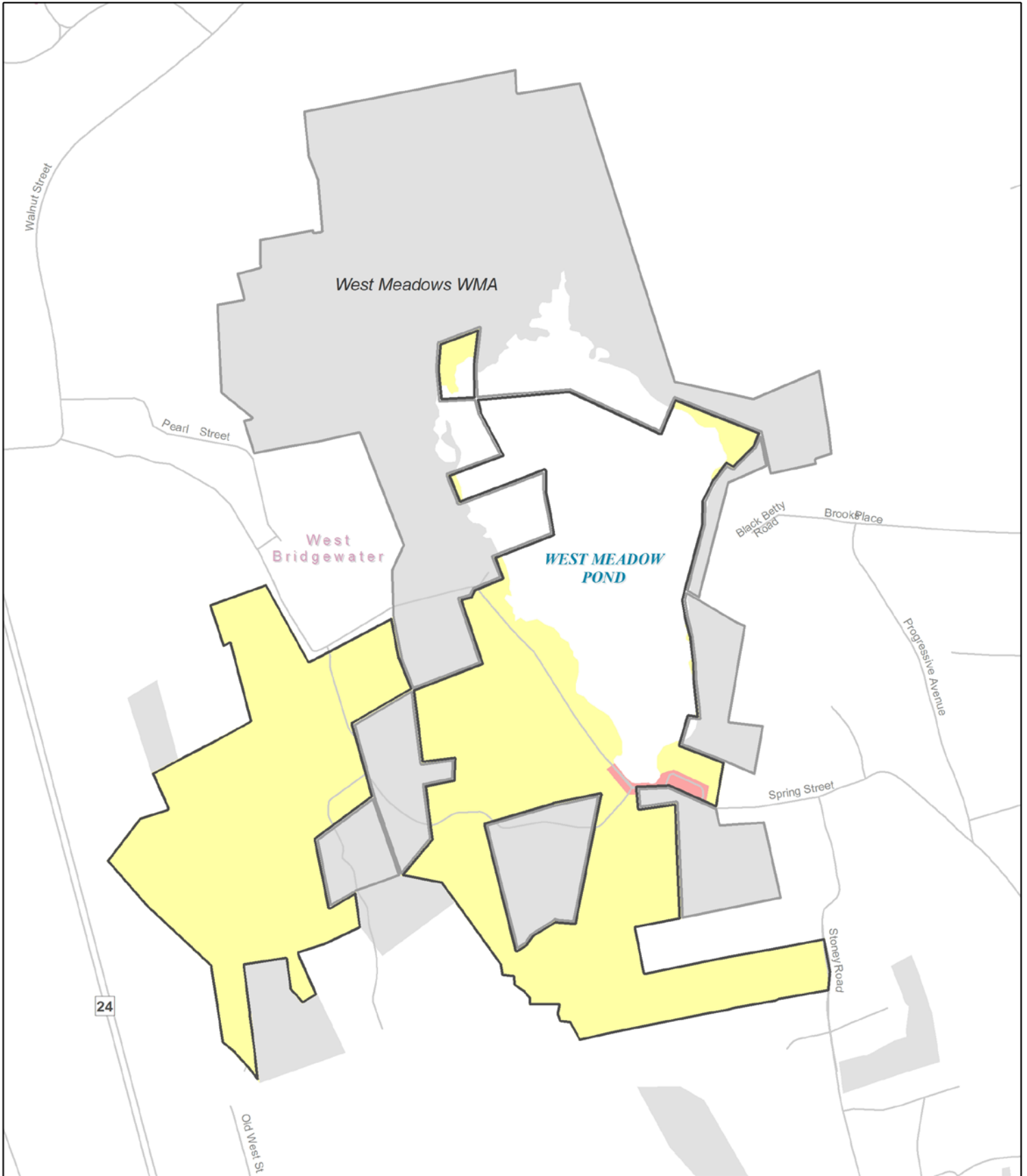
Additional maintenance and management needs observed during the preparation of this RMP, but not meeting one or more of the above criteria, are not included in this plan.

All recommendations are of equal priority.

Table 11.9.1. Priority recommendations for West Bridgewater State Forest.

Recommendation	Implementation^a
Address dam deficiencies, as identified in GZA GeoEnvironmental, Inc. (2012b).	C, D, R, V
Create barricades across the upstream and downstream slopes of the dam in a manner that prohibits OHV access while allowing for ongoing vegetation management.	D, R, V
Gate or otherwise block access points to stop illegal access by four-wheel drive vehicles and OHVs.	R
Conduct deed research to determine if the deeded right of way held by abutters at 0 Stoney Road includes parcels within the Forest.	C, P, L

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



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> West Bridgewater State Forest West Meadows WMA Other Legal Interest - DCR Other Protected Open Space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land Stewardship Zoning Zone 1 Zone 2 Zone 3 	<h3>West Bridgewater State Forest</h3> <p>Figure 11.9.1</p> <h2>Recommended Land Stewardship Zoning</h2> <p>Geographic information provided by MassGIS and DCR GIS, 2016</p>		<p>LOCUS</p>	
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