



Wachusett Reservoir Watershed  
2022 Public Access Plan Update  
Remote Public Listening Session  
October 2022



# Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Governor

**Charles D. Baker**

Lieutenant Governor

**Karyn E. Polito**

Energy and Environmental Secretary

**Bethany Card**

Department of Conservation and Recreation Commissioner

**Doug Rice**



MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF  
CONSERVATION AND RECREATION

# DCR MISSION

To protect, promote and enhance our  
commonwealth of natural, cultural  
and recreational resources  
for the well-being of all.

10/27/2022

# Meeting Logistics

- You will have the opportunity to submit any initial comments until November 25, 2022 at:
  - DCR Public Comments: <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/public-comment>.

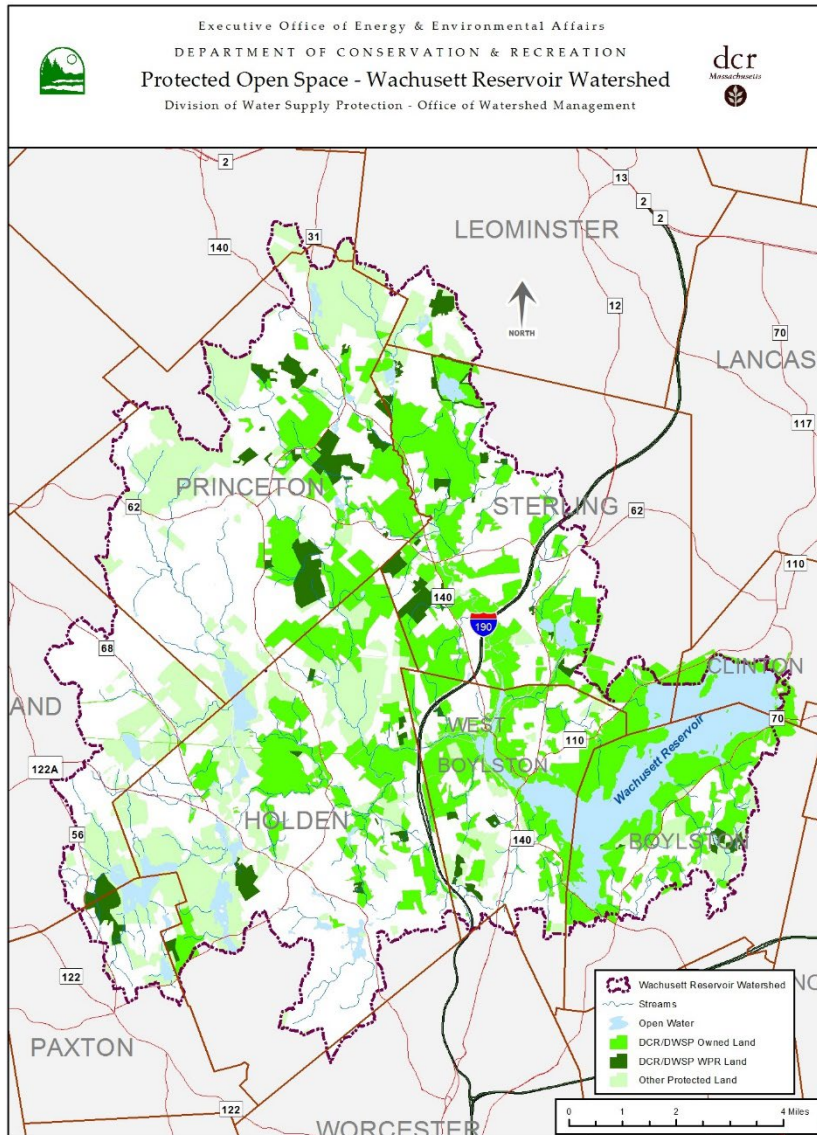
Note: content of comments you submit to DCR, along with your name, town, and zip code, will be posted on DCR's website.
- Two ways to ask questions during the meeting
  - Use chat feature
  - Raise your hand using the Zoom function, and you will be given permissions to unmute and speak.
- *Please note that this public meeting will be recorded; the recording will be a public record.*

# Wachusett Reservoir watershed

The Wachusett Reservoir is a high-quality drinking water source supply for three million residents of Eastern Massachusetts.

The Wachusett Reservoir watershed is located in central Massachusetts. The entire watershed includes approximately 117 square miles (74,919 acres) of land and water resources.

Boundaries of the Wachusett Reservoir watershed lie within 12 municipalities of Worcester County; it encompasses the towns of Boylston, Clinton, Holden, Hubbardston, Paxton, Princeton, Rutland, Sterling, West Boylston, Westminster, and the cities of Worcester and Leominster.



DCR DWSP Wachusett  
Reservoir watershed  
ownership 17,698 acres

# The Purpose of DCR DWSP Public Access Plans

- To establish policies and develop an implementation strategy that controls the impacts to water quality from human activities on Department of Conservation and Recreation, Division of Water Supply Protection lands in the Wachusett Reservoir watershed.
- The federal Safe Drinking Water Act and Amendments, state drinking water regulations, and the Department of Conservation and Recreation's Watershed Protection Regulations (313 CMR 11.00) require that public access on drinking water supply lands must be managed to minimize the risk of waterborne disease and to control other human impacts.
- The primary function of these water supply lands is to protect and provide high quality drinking water for current and future generations.
- DCR-Watershed's access plans detail management rationale and explain which programs and activities are used to limit and control access to these lands and waters.

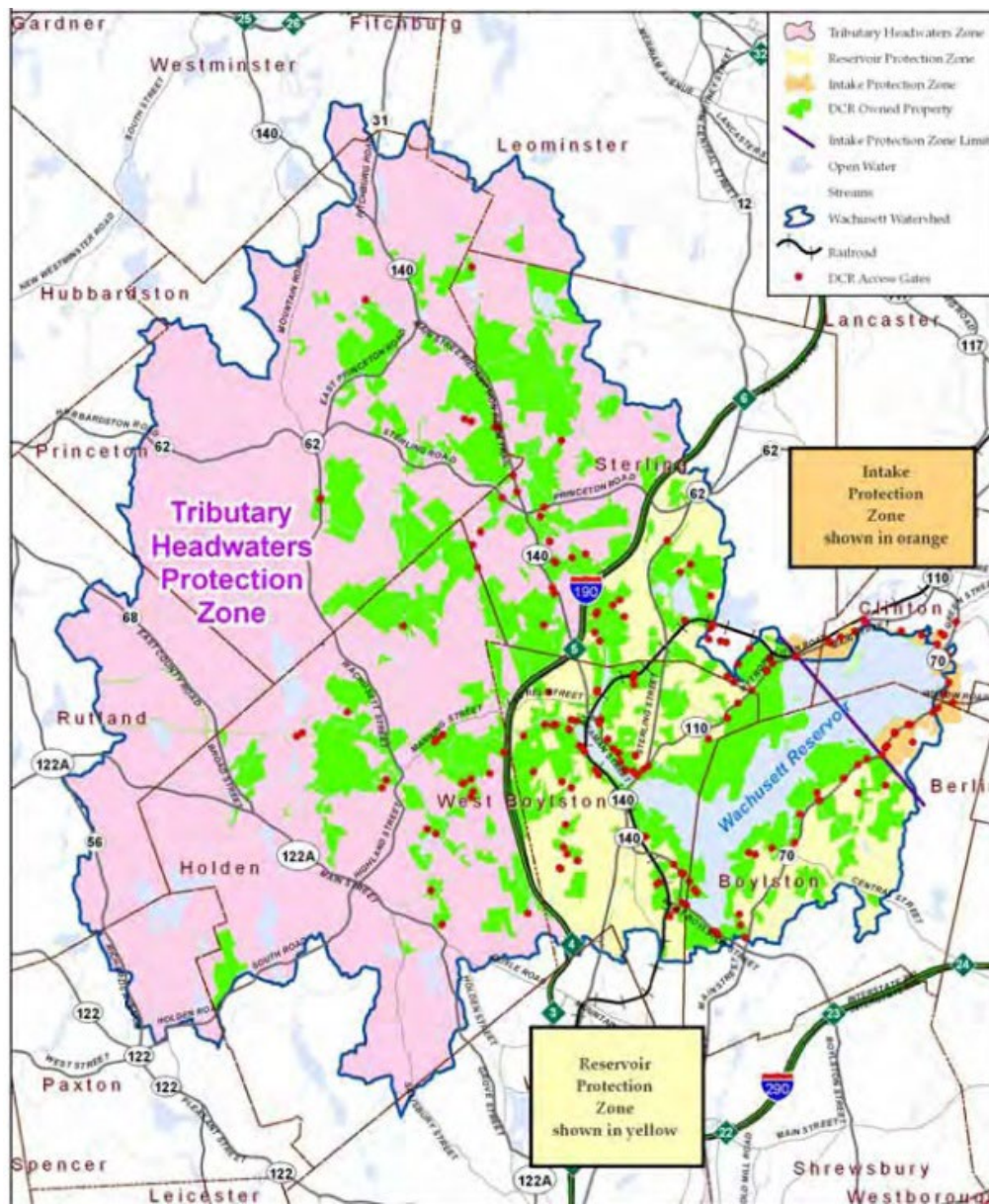
Division of Water Supply Protection Public Access Plans are reviewed approximately every 10 years on a rotating watershed basis.

The review takes into consideration new recreational activities, staff observation of current impacts and updated research.

The first Wachusett Public Access Plan was written in 1996 and subsequent updates were completed in 2003 and 2011.



## Existing resource management areas





## Intake Protection Zone

Wachusett Reservoir Watershed  
Public Access Plan 2010



0 0.5 1 Miles



# Current Wachusett Reservoir Watershed Public Access Policies

Table 13. DCR/DWSP 2011 Public Access Policy Summary- Intake Protection Zone

Activity	Intake Protection Zone				
	East Side (Non- reservoir) Route 70 from Gate 5 to Promenade	West Side (Reservoir) Route 70 from Gate 5 to Promenade	Promenade	Road Below Dam and Spillway to Top of Dam	North Dike from Spillway to Area just before Gate 36
Off-Road Driving (ORVs, ATVs)	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Snowmobiling	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Bicycling	⊘	⊘	⊘	✓	✓ <sub>1</sub>
Walking/Hiking	✓ <sub>7</sub>	⊘	✓	✓	✓
Dog Walking	⊘	⊘	⊘	✓ <sub>2</sub>	⊘
Cross-Country Skiing	✓ <sub>7</sub>	⊘	⊘	✓	✓
Shoreline Fishing	⊘	⊘	⊘	✓ <sub>3</sub>	⊘
Fishing with Waders	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Horseback Riding	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Hunting	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Boating – non-motorized	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Boating – motorized (including “jet skis”)	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Swimming	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Ice Skating/Ice Fishing	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Camping	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Picnicking	✓ <sub>4,7</sub>	⊘	⊘	✓ <sub>4</sub>	✓ <sub>4</sub>
Fires & Cooking	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Programs/Assemblies	✓ <sub>5,7</sub>	⊘	✓ <sub>5</sub>	✓ <sub>5</sub>	✓ <sub>5</sub>
Trail Clearing/Trail Marking/Advertising	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Collecting/Metal Detecting	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Geocaching/Letterboxing	✓ <sub>6,7</sub>	⊘	⊘	✓ <sub>6</sub>	✓ <sub>6</sub>

✓ - Public access is allowed in designated areas only

⊘ - Activity prohibited

1. Allowed on rail bed from gate 39 to spillway only. 2. Dogs only allowed to top of spillway and must stop at sign. Dog waste must be picked up and disposed of properly. 3. Fishing allowed from fountain impoundment to approximately 275 feet after concrete abutments of old railroad bridge. 4. Trash must be carried off of DCR property. 5. DCR Special permit required. 6. Geocaching Guidelines must be adhered to and all DCR rules apply. 7. Except for property between Rte 62(Willow Rd) and Mile Hill Roads.



Public access is allowed in designated areas only

⊘ Activity prohibited



**Table 14. DCR/DWSP 2011 Public Access Policy Summary Reservoir and Tributary Protection Zones**

Activity	Reservoir Protection Zone	Tributary Headwaters Zone
Off-Road Driving (ORVs, ATVs)	⊘	⊘
Snowmobiling	⊘	⊘
Bicycling	⊘	✓
Walking/Hiking	✓	✓
Dog Walking	⊘	⊘ <sup>1</sup>
Cross-Country Skiing	✓	✓
Shoreline Fishing	✓	✓
Fishing with Waders	✓ <sup>2</sup>	✓
Horseback Riding	⊘	⊘
Hunting See note on sidebar	⊘	✓ <sup>3</sup>
Boating – non-motorized	✓ <sup>4</sup>	✓
Boating – motorized (including “jet skis”)	⊘	⊘
Swimming	⊘	⊘
Ice Skating/Ice Fishing	⊘	⊘
Camping	⊘	⊘
Picnicking	✓	✓
Fires & Cooking	⊘	⊘
Programs/Assemblies	✓ <sup>3</sup>	✓ <sup>3</sup>
Trail Clearing/Trail Marking/Advertising	⊘	⊘
Collecting/Metal Detecting	⊘	⊘
Geocaching/Letterboxing	✓ <sup>5</sup>	✓ <sup>5</sup>

✓ - Public access is allowed in designated areas only    ⊘ - Activity prohibited

1. Dogs allowed with hunting permit only. 2. Upstream of DCR dam at Oakdale Power Station on Quinapoxet River and upstream of the Stillwater River confluence with Waushacum Brook. 3. DCR Special permit required. 4. Canoes/kayaks allowed at :West Waushacum Pond; on the Stillwater River upstream of Muddy Pond Road bridge; on the Quinapoxet River upstream of dam at Oakdale Power Station. 5. Geocaching Guidelines must be adhered to and all DCR rules apply.

Public access is allowed in designated areas only from one hour before sunrise until one hour after sunset. Any activity that injures or defaces the property of the Commonwealth is strictly prohibited. All alcoholic beverages are prohibited. Night access is prohibited. See 350 CMR 11.09(2) for a complete list of regulations. For additional information contact the Wachusett/Sudbury Rangers at 978-365-3800. In an emergency, contact the Watershed Rangers or the Massachusetts State Police at 508-829-8410 or 911.

To accomplish Division land management goals, hunting has been allowed throughout the entire watershed since 2018.

The hunting program is outlined on the DCR website at:

[Wachusett Reservoir Watershed Deer Hunt | Mass.gov](#)

**Table 15. DCR/DWSP 2011 Public Access Policy - High Use Visitor Areas**

<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>Old Stone Church</b>	<b>West Waushacum Pond</b>	<b>Oakdale Rail Trail</b>	<b>Sterling Rail Trail</b>	<b>Road Below Dam</b>
Off-Road Driving (ORVs, ATVs)	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Snowmobiling	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Bicycling	⊘	⊘	✓	✓	✓
Walking/Hiking	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dog Walking	⊘	⊘	⊘ <sup>1</sup>	⊘	✓
Cross-Country Skiing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Shoreline Fishing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ <sup>2</sup>
Fishing with Waders	⊘	⊘	✓ <sup>5</sup>	⊘	⊘
Horseback Riding	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Hunting	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Boating – non-motorized	⊘	✓	⊘	⊘	⊘
Boating – motorized (including “jet skis”)	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Swimming	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Ice Skating/Ice Fishing	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Camping	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Picnicking	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fires & Cooking	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Programs/Assemblies	✓ <sup>3</sup>	✓ <sup>3</sup>	✓ <sup>3</sup>	✓ <sup>3</sup>	✓ <sup>3</sup>
Trail Clearing/Trail Marking/Advertising	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Collecting/Metal Detecting	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘
Geocaching/Letterboxing	✓ <sup>4</sup>	✓ <sup>4</sup>	✓ <sup>4</sup>	✓ <sup>4</sup>	✓ <sup>4</sup>

✓ - Public access is allowed in designated areas only

⊘- Activity prohibited

1. Dogs only allowed on West Boylston owned portion from Oakdale to Route I-190 overpass as posted. 2. From fountain impoundment to approximately 275 feet downstream of concrete railroad abutments 3. DCR Special Permit required 4. Geocaching guidelines must be followed 5. Upstream of accretion dam.

Public access is allowed in designated areas only from one hour before sunrise until one hour after sunset. Any activity that injures or defaces the property of the Commonwealth is strictly prohibited. All alcoholic beverages are prohibited. Night access is prohibited. See 350 CMR 11.09(2) for a complete list of regulations. For additional information contact the Wachusett/Sudbury Rangers at 978-365-3800. In an emergency, contact the Watershed Rangers or the Massachusetts State Police at 508-829-8410 or 911.

# Wachusett Watershed Public Access Plan Estimated Timeline

## **October 2022 Public Listening Session**

Fall 2022 Writing of Draft Plan and distribution to stakeholders/public for review

Early Spring 2023 Public Meeting on Draft Public Access Plan

Plan revisions (if needed)

Late Spring/Early Summer 2023 Plan finalized

# Public Survey

Public Survey open October 25, 2022 until **November 30, 2022**



<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WachusettPublicAccess>

# Questions and Comments?

Please state name, address and affiliation, if any.





## Additional Information

- Recording and tonight's slide deck will be available at:
  - [www.mass.gov/dcr/past-public-meetings](http://www.mass.gov/dcr/past-public-meetings)
- If you have initial comments on this project:
  - *Submit online:* [www.mass.gov/dcr/public-comment](http://www.mass.gov/dcr/public-comment)
  - *Deadline: November 25, 2022*

*Please note: the contents of comments submitted to DCR, including your name, town and zip code, will be posted on DCR's website. Additional contact information provided, notably email address, will only be used for outreach on future updates to the subject project or property.*

- If you wish to subscribe to a DCR general information or project-related listserv: contact DCR's Office of Community Relations via email at [mass.parks@mass.gov](mailto:mass.parks@mass.gov)