



Wachusett Reservoir Watershed  
2023 Public Access Management  
Public Information Meeting on Draft Plan  
April 26, 2023



# Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Governor

**Maura T. Healey**

Lieutenant Governor

**Kimberley L. Driscoll**

Energy and Environmental Secretary

**Rebecca L. Tepper**

Department of Conservation and Recreation Commissioner

**Brian Arrigo**

At tonight's public meeting, the DCR Division of Water Supply Protection team for this project will provide an overview of the draft Wachusett Reservoir Watershed Public Access Management Plan,

- answer specific questions related to the plan, and
- take public comments on the Plan.

# Meeting Logistics

- *You will have the opportunity to submit comments on the draft plan until May 26, at:*
  - DCR Public Comments: <https://www.mass.gov/forms/dcr-public-comments>
  - Note: content of comments you submit to DCR, along with your name, town, and zip code, will be posted on DCR's website.
- *Please note that this slide deck will be available for viewing after the meeting at:*  
<https://www.mass.gov/dcr/past-public-meetings>.
- *The public is invited to ask questions and provide feedback after tonight's presentation.*

# The Wachusett Reservoir as A Drinking Water Supply

The Wachusett Reservoir, along with the Quabbin Reservoir and Ware River, are the unfiltered source of high quality water for the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority water supply system.

An unfiltered drinking water supply does not use any filtration process to remove contaminants from the water but instead relies on natural process such as soils, wetlands and forests to remove pollutants.

In order for drinking water to remain unfiltered and earn a Filtration Avoidance Determination, the U.S. EPA requires, in part, that a water system not be the source of a waterborne disease and not exceed set limits for coliform bacteria (indicators of fecal contamination and sewage) and turbidity (murkiness caused by suspended solids) <sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Maintaining the Superiority of NYC's Drinking Water (columbia.edu)

One of the ways DCR- Division of Water Supply Protection helps to maintain the system filtration waiver is by controlling public access and activities on our watershed properties through a Public Access Management Plan.

The Plan is reviewed and updated approximately every 10 years.

# The Purpose of DCR DWSP Public Access Management Plans

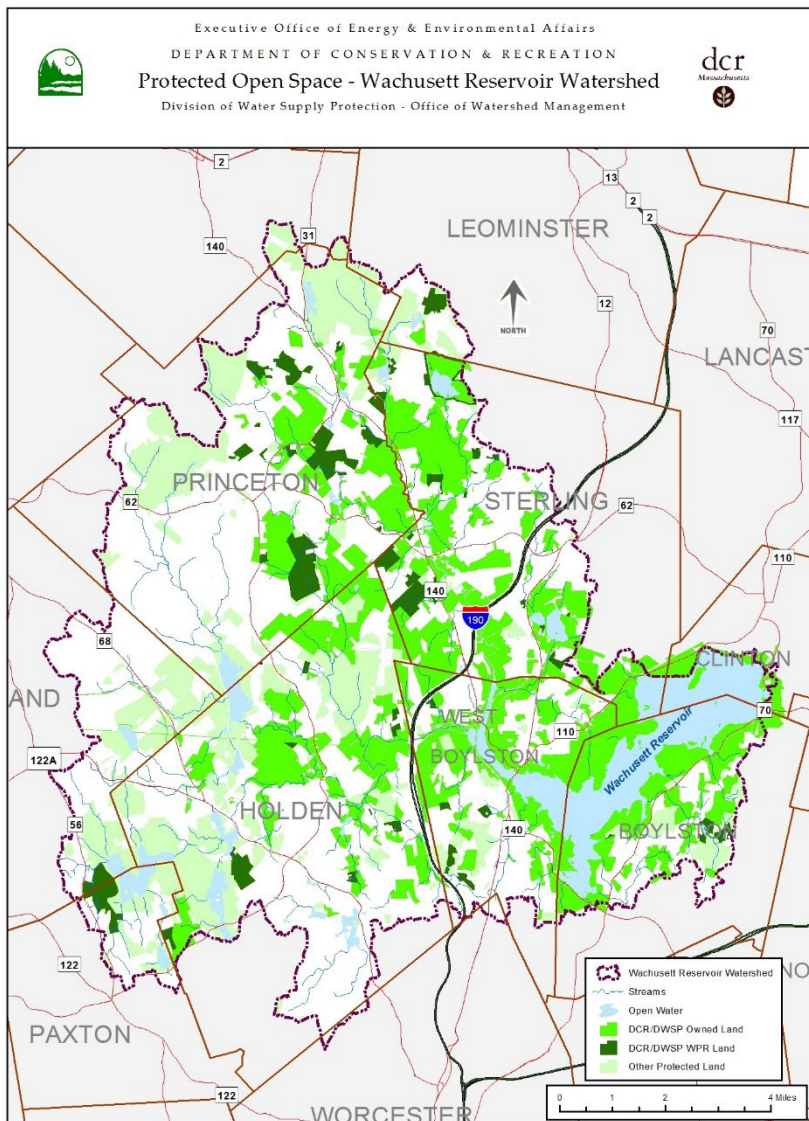
- To establish policies and develop an implementation strategy that controls the impacts to water quality from human activities on Department of Conservation and Recreation, Division of Water Supply Protection lands in Wachusett Reservoir watershed.
- The federal Safe Drinking Water Act and Amendments, 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 Management Plan was written in 1996 and subsequent updates were completed in 2003 and 2011.



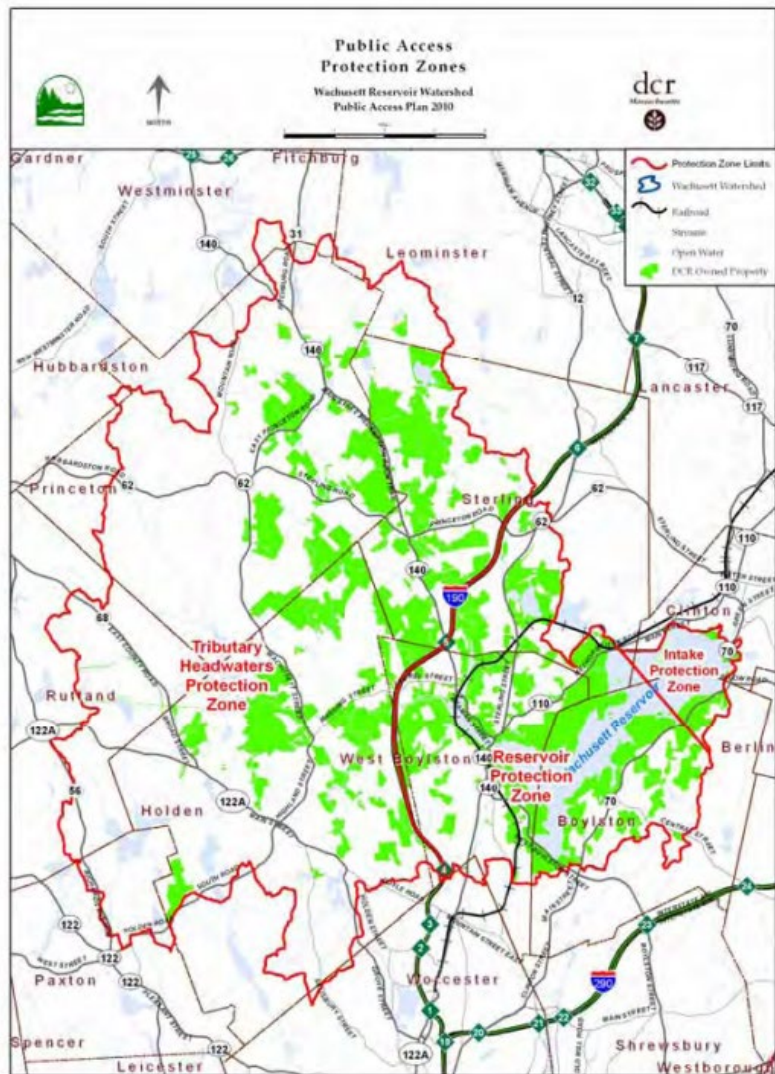


DCR DWSP ownership 17,698 acres shown in bright green

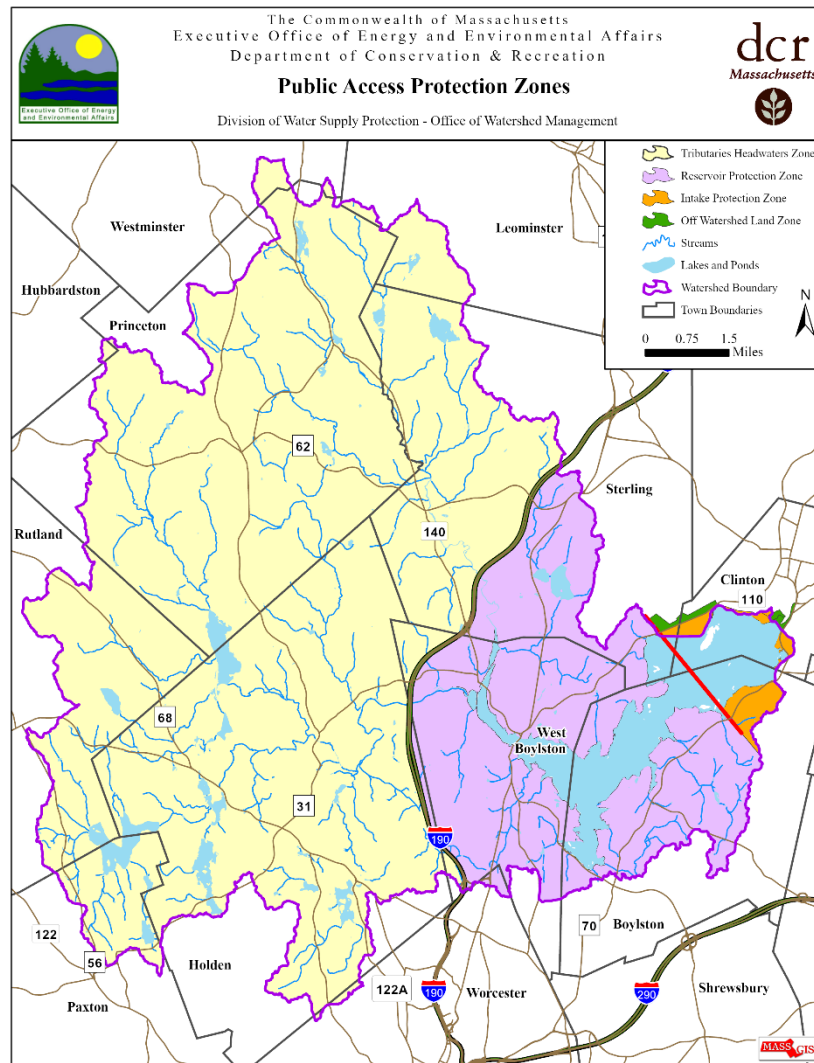
The Public Access Management Plan covers Recreational activities on Water Supply Protection lands in the Wachusett Reservoir Watershed only.

It does not include any State Park lands.

## Existing public access management zones



## 2023 revised public access management zones



Change: 2023 Off Watershed Lands Zone

# 2023 Minor Policy Changes and Clarifications

- Hunting allowed- with restrictions.
- Inclusion of the prohibition on “magnet fishing” and paddle boarding
- Extension of the last day of fishing season from November 30 to December 31
- Inclusion of e-bikes



Table 7. Summary of Public Access Policy Updates

Activity	2011 DWSP Policy	2023 Policy Changes
<b>VEHICLE ACCESS</b>		
Snowmobiling	Prohibited	No change
OHV Riding	Prohibited	No change
Bicycling-Designated Roads/E-bikes	Allowed with restrictions	Inclusion of e-bikes
Off-Road Bicycling	Prohibited	No change
Sledding	Not identified	Prohibited
<b>FOOT ACCESS</b>		
Walking/Hiking/Snowshoeing	Allowed	No change
Cross-Country Skiing	Allowed	No change
Hunting/Trapping	Allowed with restrictions	Clarified and expanded
Ice Fishing/Ice Skating	Prohibited	No change
Shore Fishing	Allowed with restrictions	Season expanded.
<b>WATER ACCESS</b>		
Boat Fishing	Allowed with restrictions at specified locations	No change
Canoeing/Kayaking/Boating	Allowed with restrictions at specified locations	No change
Wading (for fishing/launching)	Allowed with restrictions at specified areas	No change
Swimming	Prohibited	No change
Paddleboarding	Not identified	Prohibited
<b>OTHER</b>		
Organized Sports	Prohibited (except when allowed by written permit)	No change
Hunting	Allowed with restrictions at specified locations	Open to regular Massachusetts hunting seasons
Dogs/Other Animals	Prohibited	No change
Horseback Riding	Prohibited	No change
Collecting/Metal Detecting/Magnet Fishing	Prohibited	No change
Camping	Prohibited	No change
Fishing Derbies	Prohibited	No change
Target Shooting	Prohibited	No change
Advertising	Prohibited	No change
Marking or Cutting - Trails/Roads	Prohibited	No change
Alcohol-Possession of	Prohibited	No change
Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs, drones)/Underwater drones	Not identified	Prohibited (without permit)

# Wachusett Public Access Management Plan Anticipated Timeline

Fall 2022 Wachusett Reservoir Watershed Public Access Survey data collected

February 2023 Public Listening Session held

Winter/Spring 2023 Writing of Draft Plan and distribution to stakeholders/public for review

**April 26, 2023 Public Meeting on Draft Public Access Plan**

**April 26, 2023- May 26, 2023 Public Comments on Draft Plan accepted**

Plan revisions (if needed)

June/July 2023 Plan finalized

## Additional Information

- 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 comments on the Draft Plan:
  - *Submit online:* <https://www.mass.gov/forms/dcr-public-comments>
  - *Deadline: Wednesday, May 26, 2023*

*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)



# Questions and Comments?

Please state name, address and affiliation, if any.