



Above, the existing 1947 concrete block bathhouse, walkway, and concrete E-Ramp. Below, a rendering of the new bathhouse and accessible path.

DCR seeks to make the Walden Pond Main Beach compliant with state and federal accessibility laws, while also improving visitor safety and experience. Designed and constructed in the 1940s, the Main Beach ramp (known as the “E-Ramp”) negotiates a 30-foot grade change for both visitors and emergency vehicles. The steep concrete path (>12% grade) is difficult and risky to navigate, especially for visitors with disabilities. During emergencies, ambulances must share the path with beachgoers, delaying response times. Stormwater runoff from the E-Ramp discharges to the beach, degrading the water quality of Walden Pond, a cultural and environmental icon. Similar to the E-Ramp, DCR routinely receives complaints regarding the bathhouse. The 1947 concrete block bathhouse lacks proper ventilation, and its restrooms (located on the 2nd floor) are not accessible to visitors with disabilities, and are inconveniently located.

A new single-story bathhouse includes restrooms and changing areas (including three family restrooms), space for lifeguards, and a first aid room. The area of the existing bathhouse foundation will become an outdoor classroom and overlook. A new boardwalk will follow the slope of the pond, connecting Walden Street with the new bathhouse and the beach. These universally accessible facilities will mirror the aesthetic and sustainable materials of the award-winning Visitor Center. DCR will add native plantings, including 190 trees, 2,000 shrubs & plants, and 5,000 herbaceous plugs for runoff control and beautification on the pond’s east bank.

Public meetings were held in 2019. The Walden Woods Project (Walden Pond State Reservation’s Friends Group) and the Walden Advisory Board issued letters of support for the project at these meetings.

Walden Pond Main Beach Accessibility Improvements

Location:

Walden Pond State Reservation
Towns of Concord and Lincoln

Phase:

Bathhouse Construction (2025)
Boardwalk Construction (2026)

DCR Partners:

Walden Pond Advisory Board
Walden Woods Project

Consultant Team:

Ray Dunetz Landscape Architects
Maryann Thompson Architects
Crosby | Schlessinger | Smalldridge
(through 2021)

Projected Investment:

Bathhouse/Site Work: Approx. \$6M
Boardwalk: TBD

Walden Pond Main Beach Accessibility Improvements Site Plan

