



**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION**



Governor Charles D. Baker
Lt. Governor Karyn E. Polito
EEA Secretary Matthew A. Beaton
DCR Commissioner Carol I. Sanchez

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DCR Acquires 690 Acres of Ecologically Significant Habitat in Southeastern Massachusetts
Agency Continues to Seek Out and Conserve Land for the Public to Benefit

Boston – Tuesday, July 28, 2015 - Continuing a mission to protect, promote, and enhance our commonwealth of natural, cultural, and recreational resources for the wellbeing of all, the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) has announced the acquisition of two parcels of land in the Towns of Lakeville and Freetown. The two parcels, which total 690 acres of land and were purchased on June 26, 2015, are ecologically significant and will provide forest, swamp, and grassland habitats for wildlife to live, and for the public to visit and explore.

“By acquiring additional public land, the Baker-Polito Administration has provided yet another example of its dedication in ensuring land is conserved for both wildlife and public use,” **said EEA Secretary Matthew Beaton**. “Land acquisitions, such as this one, will offer excellent outdoor recreational opportunities for generations to come.”

The acquired land contains miles of trails and varied topography from lowlands to the highest point in Lakeville (estimated at 240 feet), and will become a part of the Freetown State Forest and the larger Southeastern Massachusetts Bioreserve, a multi-partner conservation area in Fall River, Freetown, Dartmouth, and Lakeville, which now contains over 15,000 acres of conservation land.

“The acquisition of nearly 700 acres of land by the Department of Conservation and Recreation will provide a very diverse and exceptional environment that will greatly benefit the people of Southeastern Massachusetts and visitors from across the state,” **said DCR Commissioner Carol Sanchez**. “By protecting this large area, the agency has conserved an incredible resource and greatly enhanced the ecological value and recreational opportunities of the Freetown State Forest.”

With Southeastern Massachusetts being one of the fastest developing regions in the state, acquiring such large parcels of undeveloped land has become increasingly difficult. Furthermore, as part of the largest unprotected and contiguous forest area in southeastern Massachusetts, efforts to protect its trees and other natural resources will assist in mitigating the effects of climate change.

“The SouthCoast is home to beautiful scenery, and I am pleased that the residents of Freetown, Lakeville, and the neighboring communities will have additional protected space to visit and enjoy,” **said State Senator Michael J. Rodrigues**. “Additionally, these parcels of land are ecologically and environmentally valuable, and under the auspices of DCR they will thrive as a habitat for many kinds of wildlife and fauna.”

“This acquisition is a major win for the environment and for wildlife,” **said State Representative Paul Schmid**. “We need large, protected spaces and the bioreserve is one of the best in the Commonwealth.”

The land parcels acquired by DCR break down into two separate land transactions, which include:

- a 613-acre parcel sold to DCR by the Town of Lakeville (after an approval at Town Meeting in 2014) at the cost of \$760,000; and
- a 77-acre parcel sold to DCR by the Rezendes Family Partnership at the cost of \$99,000.

DCR serves as the steward of over 450,000 acres of the state's parks, beaches, and forests. To learn more about the agency, please visit DCR's [website](#).

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The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), an agency of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, oversees 450,000 acres of parks and forests, beaches, bike trails, watersheds, dams, and parkways. Led by Commissioner Carol Sanchez, the agency's mission is to protect, promote, and enhance our common wealth of natural, cultural, and recreational resources. To learn more about DCR, our facilities, and our programs, please visit www.mass.gov/dcr. Contact us at mass.parks@state.ma.us.

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