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# DCR to Host a Sudbury Reservoir Watershed Deer Management Plan Public Meeting

Information meeting on September 18, 2019

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Department of Conservation & Recreation

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**WESTBOROUGH** – With high deer densities greatly impacting water supply protected land surrounding the Sudbury Reservoir, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation’s (DCR) Division of Water Supply Protection (DWSP) will host a public information meeting on Wednesday, September 18, 2019 to highlight the issue, present a draft deer hunt management plan within the watershed, and collect public input. The meeting will start at 7:00PM and will be held at the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife (MassWildlife) offices, 1 Rabbit Hill Road, Westborough, MA 01581.

Due to the impacts on the forest surrounding the reservoir from deer over-browse, the draft plan would add to the area within the watershed system that is currently open to hunting. The 3,000+ acres of undeveloped land controlled by the DWSP surrounding the Sudbury and Foss Reservoirs and their tributaries remain a valuable asset to the water supply system. The Sudbury Reservoir serves as an emergency water supply for the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA). Most recently, the Sudbury Reservoir was last used as an emergency supply in 2010 during a water main break in the Town of Weston.

Importantly, the forests in the Sudbury Watershed ensure the reliable protection of the reservoir’s water quality. Watershed management dictates that an actively growing, diverse, multi-age forest should be managed for regulating stream flow, maintaining water quality, and preventing erosion. DCR staff have documented that deer browsing is a serious threat to the health and reproductive future of forests in the watershed. Additionally, deer browsing is a major cause that is contributing to the slow regeneration of the forest area around the reservoir that is necessary to provide future overstory.

As the Sudbury Reservoir does not currently have a deer management plan in place, DCR is proposing to open a portion of the DWSP lands in the Sudbury Reservoir to hunting.

Hunting on these lands would require a free, online 5- year permit from the DWSP. The two areas contained within the draft plan that would be made available to hunting are the lands immediately surrounding the Sudbury Reservoir (1400-acres) and the Crane Swamp/Walnut Hill area (650-acres).

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## Media Contact

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### **Department of Conservation & Recreation**

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