



Resource Management Plan Sutton State Forest



Adopted by the DCR Stewardship Council February, 2025

Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation
Division of Conservation and Resource Stewardship
Office of Cultural Resources

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Purpose

Resource Management Plans (RMPs) are foundational documents that identify a park, forest, or reservation's defining natural, cultural, and recreational resources and identify potential threats and opportunities to guide DCR's continued stewardship of the property and to inform future decisions about the property in a way that celebrates and preserves its identity.

RMPs are prepared for "all reservations, parks, and forests under the management of the department" (M.G.L. c. 21, § 2F). These plans "shall include guidelines for the operation and land stewardship of the aforementioned reservations, parks and forests, shall provide for the protection and stewardship of natural and cultural resources and shall ensure consistency between recreation, resource protection, and sustainable forest management." DCR finalizes RMPs following a public process and adoption by the DCR Stewardship Council. The contents of this RMP represent the best available information at the time of adoption by the Stewardship Council.

Mission and Core Principles

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, parkways, and over 100 National Register listed properties. The agency's mission is to protect, promote, and enhance our common wealth of natural, cultural, and recreational resources for the well-being of all.

DCR strives to be an exemplary leader in conservation and recreation. DCR's staff is passionate, dedicated, and continuously employs best practices, expertise, and a sense of place in carrying out the mission. The following core principles ground the agency in its work. For the benefit and well-being of all—people and the environment—DCR pledges to:

- Provide access to a diversity of outdoor recreational experiences and unique landscapes that is equitable, inclusive, and welcoming.
- Conserve lands, water, and forests by integrating science, research, and technical expertise into the management of our natural resources.
- Advance climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts by implementing sustainable practices and advancing resiliency across our infrastructure, assets, and resources.
- Support healthy communities by providing places for people to connect with nature and each other.
- Inspire generations of stewards by recognizing and honoring our legacy through partnerships, public engagement, and education.

Stewardship

DCR honors Indigenous peoples for their care, throughout many generations, of the land that DCR now stewards on behalf of the people of the Commonwealth. DCR embraces this legacy of stewardship, fostering a sense of shared responsibility by all people for protection of the waters, lands and living things for the enjoyment and appreciation of all.

To learn more about the DCR, its facilities, and programs please visit us www.mass.gov/dcr. Contact us at mass.parks@mass.gov.

Sutton State Forest

1. PROPERTY OVERVIEW

Characteristic	Value
Date Established	1924
Location	Sutton
Ecoregion	Southern New England Coastal Plains and Hills
Watershed	Blackstone
DCR Region	Central
DCR District	Central Valley
DCR Complex	Blackstone
Management Forestry District	Mid-State
Fire Control District	South Worcester
Size (acres)	1,532.3
Boundary Length (miles)	27.8
Elevation - Minimum (feet)	359.2
Elevation - Maximum (feet)	785.2
Environmental Justice (acres)	0.0
Annual Attendance (2019)	Unknown
Interpretive Programs (number of programs, 2023)	0
Interpretive Programs (number of attendees, 2023)	0

2. LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS

Designation	Acres
Parkland	197.7
Reserve	0.0
Woodland	1,066.7
No Designation	268.1

3. REGULATORY DESIGNATIONS

Designation	Acres
National Register Historic District - Manchaug Village	38.1
Priority Habitat (MESA)	134.6

4. LONG-TERM AGREEMENTS

Agreement	Expiration Year
License agreement among Whitinsville Water Company, Metacomet Land Trust, and DCR	None

5. CONCESSIONS

Concession Type
None

6. PARTNERS & FRIENDS

Group(s)
Metacomet Land Trust
Whitinsville Water Company

7. FEATURES OF INTEREST

Feature
CCC Bridge over Purgatory Brook
Former "Waters Airport"
Little Purgatory
Sibley Mill bridges
Trail system

8. NATURAL RESOURCES

Resource	Number
Tree Canopy (acres)	1,481.1
Rivers and Streams (miles)	4.8
Open Water (acres)	0.3
Wetlands (acres)	66.7
Certified Vernal Pools (number)	1
Potential Vernal Pools (number)	14
State-listed Species (number Regulatory)	1
State-listed Species (number Non-Regulatory)	0
Federally Listed Species (number)	0
Aquatic Invasive Plants (number of known species)	0
Terrestrial Invasive Plants (number of known species)	4

9. FOREST MANAGEMENT (SINCE 2012)

Management Objective	Acres
N/A	0.0

10. CLIMATE CHANGE (BY 2070)

Type of Change	Amount of Change
Increase in annual days above 90° F	>30
Change in annual maximum daily rainfall (inches)	>10
Massachusetts Coastal Flood Risk Model area of inundation (acres)	N/A

11. NATURAL HAZARDS

Hazard Type	Acres
Flood (1.0%-chance)	29.8
Flood (0.2%-chance)	39.5
Hurricane Inundation (Category 1)	N/A
Hurricane Inundation (Category 4)	N/A

12. CULTURAL RESOURCES

Resource Type	Number
Archaeological - listed in the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS)	7
Historical - Listed in MACRIS	6
National Register-listed	1
National Historic Landmark	0

13. RECREATION RESOURCES

Resource	Number
Trail System	1

14. RECREATION ACTIVITIES

Activity
Bicycling, mountain
Dog walking, on-leash
Hiking/Walking
Hunting
Nature study/Photography

15. ROADS AND TRAILS

Metric	Number
Roads - Unpaved (miles)	0.1
Roads - Paved (miles)	0.0
Forest Roads - Unpaved (miles)	4.6
Forest Roads - Paved (miles)	0.0
Trails - Unpaved (miles)	3.7
Trails - Paved (miles)	0.0
Trails - Unauthorized (miles)	9.7
Trail Density (miles/acre)	0.012
Area of Impact (acres)	585.7

16. PARKING

Parking Resources	Number
Lots	2
Parking Spaces - Total	21
Parking Spaces - Accessible (HP)	0
Parking Spaces - Other	21

INTRODUCTION

Sutton State Forest (Sutton or the Forest) is located entirely within the Town of Sutton (the Town), approximately 10 miles south of Worcester. The Forest is bisected by Mendon Road. North of the road, the Forest surrounds Purgatory Chasm State Reservation (Purgatory Chasm) on that park's north, west, and south sides. South of the road, the Forest wraps around Whitinsville Water Company (WWC) watershed lands on their north and west sides.

The Forest is on land shaped by generations of Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous inhabitants. Past and present Indigenous residents embody fluid, relational connections to the places and spaces now known as Sutton State Forest. Groups and individuals, including peoples known as the Nipmuc(k), are recorded in available documentation (Native Land Digital 2023) as having relationships to this place over seasons and generations. The hills and waterways of the Town were important for resource collection, including stone quarrying. Today, Indigenous peoples maintain an ongoing presence in the region. Following Indigenous peoples' dispossession, many local Indigenous residents were brought into praying towns in the region. In 1704, the Massachusetts General Court (MGC) granted the lands to settlers; the Town's incorporation followed in 1714. Over the next 150 years, the Town of Sutton developed an economy based in agriculture, textile and machine industries, and wood products whose land clearing set the stage for the state forest program (Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) 1983).

In the case of Sutton State Forest, the Forest's creation is closely associated with Purgatory Chasm. However, Sutton's current uses are a function of its history as a state forest, while Purgatory Chasm's current uses are a function of its origin as a county-managed state reservation. In 1916, the Massachusetts House of Representatives directed the State Forest Commission "to investigate the practicability and advisability...of establishing a State Reservation at Purgatory Chasm" (MGC 1916). The Commission identified land needed to protect Purgatory Chasm and noted it "would seriously consider the advisability of acquiring a few hundred acres of land now stripped of its timber and adjoining the Chasm tract, and thereby make the same into a State forest" (Shepard and Rane 1917). In 1925, five years after the establishment of Purgatory Chasm State Reservation, those "few hundred acres" were acquired and became Sutton State Forest. Once under different management authorities, Sutton and Purgatory Chasm are now physically and operationally linked, their histories and their present intertwined.

Because Sutton is contiguous with Purgatory Chasm, recreation is best considered from the context of the two parks combined. Each property provides a different, but complementary, visitor experience. Purgatory Chasm has built recreation facilities (e.g., picnic tables, visitor center, parking lots, drinking fountains, and a playground) that concentrate visitors. In contrast, recreation at Sutton State Forest is trail-based and dispersed. The Forest's only recreation amenity is a trail network that largely consists of old forest roads and almost four miles of unauthorized user-created trails that traverse rocky hills. In recent years Sutton has become known as a destination for mountain biking. Together, these two DCR properties provide day-use visitors with modern park amenities, opportunities for trail-based recreation, and off-trail adventures.

PARK IDENTITY

Sutton State Forest's identity is that of an undeveloped property that provides opportunities for trail-based recreation. It is overshadowed by the older, and better known, Purgatory Chasm State

Reservation, and is often seen as an extension of that park. (See the Purgatory Chasm RMP for additional information on that property.) There are three major user groups at Sutton: mountain bikers that use the park for its trails (both authorized and unauthorized) and to access adjacent lands; hunters; and visitors to Purgatory Chasm that are unaware that they have entered Sutton State Forest. Future uses should be consistent with the Forest's identity as an undeveloped property that provides opportunities for trail-based recreation on authorized trails.

DEFINING RESOURCES AND VALUES

Resources and values that define the Forest are related to its trails network and proximity to Purgatory Chasm. They include:

- Sutton is a large, undeveloped forest with no recreational facilities, providing visitors with a unique backcountry experience.
- An official trail network that provides dispersed, trail-based recreation around a series of forest roads, including some roads constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC).
- An extensive network of unauthorized trails within the Forest and on adjacent Metacomet Land Trust and WWC properties.
- Physical and administrative connections between Purgatory Chasm State Reservation and Sutton State Forest.
- Little Purgatory, a series of small waterfalls in a rocky hemlock stand more reminiscent of northern New England than southern Worcester County. Because it is accessed through Purgatory Chasm State Reservation, Little Purgatory is often perceived as part of that Reservation.
- The Sibley Mill site, a colonial period sawmill complex located along Purgatory Brook. The site consists of a large mill foundation, earthen berm, stone dam, and stone walls.
- Three historic bridges over Purgatory Brook. Two of these bridges are massive granite slabs and date to ca. 1756–1794 (Meltsner 2002a, 2002b). The third bridge is a concrete, wood, and fieldstone bridge constructed by the CCC in 1936 (Berg 1998). The latter remains in active use by hikers and Forest staff.
- A portion of the Forest is located within the Manchaug Village National Register Historic District (NRHD). Contributing resources of the District, including a granite quarry, Upper Tucker Pond, and the Upper Tucker Pond Dam and Spillway, are located within the Forest.
- “Waters Airport,” an approximately 34-acre former grass airfield.

STATEMENTS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Statements of Significance describe the importance or distinctiveness of a place and its resources (National Park Service (NPS) 1998). These statements reflect current scholarly inquiry and interpretation and go beyond a simple listing of resources to include contextual information that makes the facts more meaningful. When developing significance statements, the following criteria are considered:

- The property's significance at the time of its establishment.
- How the property, or society's understanding of the property, has changed since its acquisition that makes it significant or unique within the state park system today.

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- The property's role in recreation and its importance to the community it supports, particularly regarding activities that are unique to that property.

For park planning, these statements focus management actions on the preservation and enjoyment of those attributes that most directly contribute to the importance of the place. For interpretive planning, they comprise the information upon which the interpretive themes and overall program are built.

The following Statements of Significance have been identified for Sutton State Forest. The sequence of these statements does not reflect their level of significance.

- Thought to be in Purgatory Chasm State Reservation, "Little Purgatory" is actually in Sutton State Forest. Although visually similar to Purgatory Chasm, it has a tributary of Purgatory Brook flowing through it where Purgatory Chasm is dry and was likely formed in a different way.
- Sutton State Forest contains the remains of an unpaved airfield, one of a handful of former airfields on DCR property. The landscape created by this airfield creates multiple abutting habitats. The grasslands provide critical habitat for insects (especially pollinators), birds, and mammals.
- The state forests were partly created to lessen the Commonwealth's dependency on out of state lumber and to support industry in Massachusetts. Early forest management strategies were driven by productivity and economics. As the science and societal stewardship values evolved, increased consideration was given to the environmental impacts of a site-specific forest management project. In some cases, other objectives, such as improving wildlife habitat or maintaining forest resilience might be the primary reason for a particular project.
- The Massachusetts State Forest system was founded on the principles of scientific forest management. These practices contrasted with ongoing un-managed destructive cutting practices throughout the country. This effort focused on the long-term cultivation of forests to achieve a sustainable harvest. Foresters worked to maximize production and provide a sustained yield over time, aiming for long-term stewardship over short term profits. The state forests were also meant to serve as a model for private landowners, who the state foresters assisted in this endeavor.

UNIFYING THEME

The Unifying Theme is a statement that ties a property's stories together and shapes the overall interpretive message that DCR wants to share with visitors in their experience at the property. The theme provides an overarching conclusion for visitors to contemplate (Ham 2013) and answers the question "so what?" The theme guides all interpretation for the park, both personal (i.e., formal and informal interactions with visitors) and non-personal (e.g., exhibits, signage, brochures).

The Unifying Theme for Sutton State Forest is:

Managing our State Forests for diversity and resilience leads to a healthier environment for us to live in and enjoy.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Sutton provides a variety of visitor experiences, including the following:

- **Virtual Experience.** Potential visitors will find little information about Sutton State Forest on DCR's web site. The "Find a Park" tool (<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/find-a-park>) identifies the

Forest's location and lists Hiking/Walking as activities that visitors may enjoy here. There is no additional information to help potential visitors plan a trip. The Purgatory Chasm State Reservation web page does not list Sutton as being one of its "related parks."

- **Entering the Forest.** There is no formal gateway to the Forest. Most recreationists park at the Mendon Road trailhead or along that road's shoulder to access the Forest. There is no Main Identification Sign at this location. Visitors to Little Purgatory typically enter the Forest by hiking through Purgatory Chasm State Reservation.
- **Trail-based Passive Recreation.** Sutton provides a backcountry trail experience with its extensive trails network that largely consists of old forest roads and unauthorized user-created trails that traverse rocky hills. Hikers and trail runners may connect to trails at Purgatory Chasm State Reservation; mountain bikes are prohibited in the Reservation.
- **Little Purgatory.** Visitors exiting Purgatory Chasm to the south are greeted by a sign directing them to either "Forest Road and Trail" or to "Little Purgatory." The latter is reached by walking approximately 1,000 feet along a near-level forest road that parallels Purgatory Brook. At the end of the road is Little Purgatory, a series of small waterfalls and a large water scoured pothole in stone.
- **Hunting and Trapping.** Hunting is a common recreation activity in the Forest but is prohibited at nearby Purgatory Chasm State Reservation.

THREATS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The following information identifies potential threats to the park's natural and cultural resources and identifies opportunities to enhance their protection and stewardship. Although recreation is not considered a resource under statute (M.G.L. c. 21, § 2F), it is included below because recreation is an important part of the park-going experience, helps define a park's values, and is a key part of assessing the consistency of activities taking place in the Commonwealth's forests, parks, and reservations.

Threats and opportunities identified below are used to inform the development of management recommendations. Potential recommendations must meet prioritization criteria to be included in the Priority Recommendations table (Table 18, page 25).

Natural Resources

Threats

- Trail-users have created an extensive network of unauthorized trails throughout the Forest and on adjacent private lands. Some of these trails, such as the "Par 5 Trail" pass directly through wetlands and wetland buffers, negatively impacting these sensitive resources. Construction of these unauthorized trails was performed without proper authorization or required regulatory review.
- Four invasive plants are known from the Forest: Asiatic bittersweet, Japanese barberry, multiflora rose, and winged euonymus. An unidentified honeysuckle is present, which may be an additional invasive plant. None of the known invasive plants are considered Early Detection Priority Species (BSC Group 2017) or are known to be impacting rare species or Priority Natural Communities. However, their distribution and abundance in the Forest is unknown.
- Fields at the former Waters Airport are being periodically mowed by an entity other than DCR and there is no agreement or management plan to guide this activity.

Opportunities

- Approximately 268 acres of the Forest has no Landscape Designation (DCR 2012). Assigning Landscape Designations to these portions of the Forest could help with management of associated natural resources and ensure management consistent with other DCR properties statewide.
- An opportunity exists to increase the conservation value of the Forest by managing the fields and hedgerows at the former Waters Airport as grasslands or shrublands for pollinators, birds, or other wildlife. Such early successional areas are in “critically short supply” in the Northeast and provide habitat for many species of wildlife with declining populations (Oehler et al. 2006).
- Some of the Forest’s 14 potential vernal pools may “support rich communities of vertebrates and invertebrates” (Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MassWildlife) 2009) and serve as important habitat components for other wildlife, including the Forest’s state-listed species. Surveying and certifying these pools (DCR (n.d.a) and MassWildlife (2009)), as appropriate, may help better protect these animals.
- Invasive plants are not widespread, creating the opportunity to manage these species before they become well-established in the Forest.

Cultural Resources

Threats

- The historic earthen dam constructed by the Manchaug Company ca. 1878 for Upper Tucker Pond survives in a ruined state, with trees and brush covering its components (Broomer et al. 2018). This dam breached on March 18, 1936, leading to damage of the dam at Lower Tucker Pond and to an associated mill (i.e., Mill #2).
- Sibley Mill is being threatened by damage from tree growth and erosion from Purgatory Brook.
- Construction and use of the previously mentioned network of unauthorized trails may disturb untested areas of the park that have potential archeological resources. Some of these trails pass through stone walls and over rock structures of potential Indigenous peoples origin, damaging these resources.

Opportunities

- Approximately 268 acres of the Forest has no Landscape Designation (DCR 2012). Assigning Landscape Designations to these portions of the Forest could help with management of associated cultural resources and ensure management consistent with other DCR properties statewide.
- An opportunity exists to manage the fields at the former Waters Airport as hayfields or cropland to create an example of the agricultural landscapes that historically occurred along Mendon Road.
- Carefully removing vegetation from the vicinity of the Sibley Mill’s foundation, berm, and stone dam would help stabilize this site.
- Stone features, often parts of broader stone landscapes, have been identified in the Forest; their origins and cultural significance remain undetermined. Assessing, inventorying, and preserving these resources are a high priority for DCR.
- The granite quarry provides evidence of historical stone quarrying activities, including various traces of drill scars from plug-and-feather rock cutting (Broomer et al. 2018). A better understanding of the

quarry would provide additional insight into the interrelated history of the Manchaug Village NRHD and the Forest.

Recreation

Threats

- There is limited official information available on Sutton State Forest. DCR's web page does not include information on the Forest, making it difficult for potential visitors to become aware of the property and its recreational opportunities.
- There is an extensive network of unauthorized user-created and named trails, such as the Par 5 Loop, Low Roller Trail, and Joe's Trail. These were constructed with neither authorization nor regulatory review. Much of their design does not meet DCR trail guidelines (DCR 2019). These trails contribute to the Parkland portion of the Forest having a trail density of 0.0386 miles/acre, approximately 70% greater than the maximum recommended trail density of 0.0226 miles/acre. In contrast, trail density in the Woodland portion of the Forest is 0.0075 miles/acre, well below the recommended threshold of 0.0151 miles/acre.
- The Forest's trailhead on the south side of Mendon Road and associated trails facilitate unauthorized recreation on WWC property. Except for an approximately 1-mile-long trail corridor specified in a license agreement, there is no legal public access to WWC property.
- The license agreement between the WWC, Metacomet Land Trust, and DCR for public access on limited trails across WWC property requires that DCR monitor trail activity and maintain trails on a regular basis and mark the trail corridor with informational signs stating the rules and regulations of trail use and that the property is private. These signs are not present, and monitoring of these trails is infrequent.
- Private properties along the perimeter of the Forest and privately-owned inholdings host recreationist-created trails that serve as connectors to the Forest's trails system. It is unclear if the landowners are aware of, or endorse, public use of trails across their property.
- Although no Forest infrastructure is exposed to the impacts of 1.0%-chance or 0.2%-chance storms, connector trails across private property near Dark Brook and Upper Tucker's Pond are predicted to be exposed to the impacts of these storms, isolating sections of the Forest's trails network.
- The Forest's two small parking areas, located along Mendon Road, are insufficient for current use levels. This results in visitors parking along road shoulders and occasionally on adjacent private land.
- Signs posted along Mendon Road in Sutton State Forest incorrectly identify the area as being part of Purgatory Chasm State Reservation, which deters hunting and mountain biking in areas that are officially open to these activities.
- Visitors to the Forest are provided only a single kiosk, with a largely empty bulletin board. There is no welcome wayside or interpretive panels. Information is also absent from the visitor center in nearby Purgatory Chasm and from trail signs and internal navigation signs at that property.

Opportunities

- Adding information on Sutton State Forest to DCR's web page would allow potential visitors to become aware of the Forest, its resources, and associated recreation opportunities.

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- Adding standard DCR intersection directional signs and reassurance markers and blazes (DCR 2019) and the removal of unauthorized signs, would increase navigation and encourage recreationists to stay on authorized trails.
- Developing an official DCR trail map for the Forest would encourage visitation, educate the public about the Forest and its resources, encourage the use of authorized trails, and help protect resources.
- There is potential to establish a planned trails network from Central Turnpike to the north, to Putnam Hill Road to the south.
- Multiple private inholdings exist within the forest; acquisition of these parcels would lead to an improved trails network south of Mendon Road.
- Access to the section of the Forest northeast of Route 146 is challenging. A preliminary review failed to identify any easements or deeded rights that provide access to these “orphaned” parcels. Allowing legal access to these parcels would create recreational access for activities such as hunting.
- Increasing information on Sutton State Forest on DCR’s web page and at Purgatory Chasm may attract additional hunters and mountain bikers to the Forest.
- The Forest’s cultural grassland is a former aircraft landing strip and has been maintained in grasses and shrubs since the property was acquired. If the area were converted into early successional habitat for birds and pollinators it could enhance the visitor experience by offering additional wildlife viewing opportunities.
- Adding and updating information in the Forest’s existing kiosk could help increase appreciation for the Forest’s resources and promote their protection.
- Establishing a formal park gateway, with parking and park information, would create a destination for visitors and inform them of the key resources, rules, and recreation opportunities within the Forest.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change impacts nearly every aspect of DCR’s properties, from ecosystem health, to infrastructure, to recreation. (See DCR 2024 for an overview of these impacts.) The Department is actively working to mitigate and adapt to current and future impacts through such actions as forest management; decarbonizing DCR’s buildings, vehicles, and power equipment; protecting wetlands; and using nature-based solutions to minimize stormwater impacts. Information on these, and other, efforts is incorporated into RMPs as available and appropriate.

Any discussion of climate change requires a shared understanding of terminology. Because of this, this RMP section adopts commonly accepted terms to the greatest extent possible. In general, climate-related technical terms used in this RMP are as defined in the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC 2021). Exceptions to this are the terms Adaptation, Risk, and Sensitivity, which are used as defined in DCR’s Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment (CCVA; Weston and Sampson 2022).

DCR manages its forests to provide a range of ecosystem services such as recreation, clean water, wood commodities, and wildlife habitat (DCR 2020). For ecosystems under its management, DCR carefully considers both their vulnerability to climate change and their ability to mitigate the effects of climate

change by storing carbon in ecosystems and harvested wood products. Several approaches are used to monitor DCR forests and to design forest management strategies to adapt to climate change and provide ecosystem services. (See Swanston et al. (2016) for information on adaptation strategies and approaches associated with DCR's forest management.) Established in 1957, DCR's Continuous Forest Inventory (CFI) system uses a network of more than 2,000 permanent plots on which repeated measurements are taken on an ongoing basis. The CFI measures the status, size, and health of over 100,000 trees; other vegetation; down woody material; and the forest floor. (See DCR 2022 for additional information on the CFI system.) This information helps DCR understand at a strategic scale the current character, condition, and trends of forest ecosystems under its care. DCR also uses operational inventory to help plan specific treatments and evaluate their outcomes. Using these different scales of information, remotely sensed data, and local and regional external expertise, DCR plans projects that help its stands, forests, and other lands adapt to climate change and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions. The conservation and science-based management of forest lands are an essential element to ensuring crucial carbon storage and advancing climate change resilience (Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) 2024). For additional information on the relationship between DCR's forest management practices and climate change, please see pages 77–85 in Massachusetts Forest Action Plan 2020 (DCR 2020) and Managing Our Forests...For Carbon Benefits (DCR 2023).

The Department is actively assessing and addressing the vulnerability of its properties and facilities to the impacts of climate change. In 2022, DCR conducted a Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment (Weston and Sampson 2022). Findings from this CCVA are being used by DCR to enhance park operations and maintenance, inform resilient investment, and provide a framework for hazard mitigation and climate adaptation for natural resources, cultural resources, recreational activities, buildings, facilities, and other infrastructure. Property-specific climate change information from the CCVA is included in the Climate Change (by 2070) table (Table 12) at the beginning of this RMP. An overview of the impacts of climate change on DCR facilities and operations is presented in the DCR Climate Impacts Story Map (DCR 2024).

Climate Exposure and Impacts

A summary of the ways in which the Commonwealth's natural, cultural, and recreational resources may be impacted by climate change is provided below. During the preparation of RMPs some resources may be identified as having particularly high exposure and/or sensitivity to the anticipated hazards or consequences of climate change. When this occurs, these resources and the projected impacts to them are described. In some instances, the potential impacts of climate change on a given resource are not well understood. When this occurs, only exposure is discussed.

Natural Resources—General Impacts

Climate change affects temperature, precipitation, and atmospheric and ocean chemistry, which in turn directly and indirectly affect the natural environment, including the plants, animals, and natural communities of DCR's forests, parks, and reservations.

Climate is known to influence the presence, absence, distribution, reproductive success, and survival of both native and non-native plants (Finch et al. 2021). Native northern and boreal species, including balsam fir, red spruce, and black spruce may fare worse under future conditions, but other species may benefit from the projected changes in climate (Janowiak et al. 2018). Some non-native invasive species

will be affected by climate change while others will remain unaffected, and some non-invasive non-native species are likely to become invasive (Finch et al. 2021). In general, elevated temperature and CO₂ enrichment associated with climate change increases the performance of non-native plants more strongly than the performance of native plants (Liu et al. 2017). Climate change may result in the presence of new non-native invasive plants on a property, and changes to the distribution and/or abundance of invasives already present on a property.

Exposure to a changing climate affects wildlife in a variety of ways. For animals that live in or near aquatic environments, “changes in habitat and hydrological regimes are expected to shift their abundance and distribution” (Isaak et al. 2018: 89). Impacts to terrestrial animals are expected to be highly variable (Halofsky et al. 2018) but may be considered to fall into the following four categories: 1. habitat loss and fragmentation; 2. physiological sensitivities (i.e., innate characteristics that influence the ability to cope with changing temperature and precipitation conditions); 3. alterations in the timing of species’ life cycles; and 4. indirect effects (e.g., disruption of ecological relationships) (Friggens et al. 2018). Although all Northeast wildlife are exposed to hazards associated with climate change, some groups, “including montane birds, salamanders, cold-adapted fish, and freshwater mussels, could be particularly affected by changing temperatures, precipitation, sea and lake level, and ocean processes” (MassWildlife 2015: 357). In addition, it is the position of the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program that state-listed species and Priority Natural Communities are likely to be highly sensitive to climate change and that all state-listed species will be negatively affected by hydrologic changes, changes in water, soil, and air temperature, and changes in forest composition.

Natural Resources—Property-Specific Exposure and Impacts

Climate change may cause some vernal pools to dry earlier in the season than they have historically, potentially interfering with amphibian life cycles (Cartwright et al. 2022). Because of this, some of the Forest’s pools and associated wildlife may be negatively impacted. Similar impacts may occur at potential vernal pools that function as vernal pools.

Responses of Massachusetts’ invasive plants (i.e., those categorized as Invasive by the Massachusetts Invasive Plants Advisory Group (2024)) to a changing climate are largely unknown. However, sufficient information exists to project the likely future trend of Oriental bittersweet and Japanese barberry. “Available data suggest that bittersweet is likely to benefit from the warming and increased precipitation that are predicted for the Northeast” (Rustad et al. 2012), resulting in expansion throughout New England. Areas where the forest canopy or forest floor has been disturbed are particularly susceptible (McNab and Loftis 2002). Because of this, it is anticipated that Oriental bittersweet will continue to expand within Sutton State Forest in response to climate change. Climate change facilitates invasion by Japanese barberry “because of higher growth and germination in warmer climates” (Merow et al. 2017: E3276). Because of this, it is anticipated that barberry will further spread at the Forest.

Cultural Resources—General Impacts

Climate change may negatively affect cultural resources, their preservation, and maintenance (EEA 2022; International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) Climate Change and Cultural Heritage Working Group 2019; Rockman et al. 2016: 3, 18; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Center 2007). In Massachusetts, cultural resources may be exposed to the following natural phenomena that are correlated with adverse impacts: higher annual average

temperature (especially in winter), increased numbers of freeze-thaw cycles, increased precipitation intensity, higher relative humidity, higher wind speeds, an increase in severe storm events, increased numbers and severity of wildfires, more severe seasonal droughts, increase in number and severity of inland flood events, increased coastal flooding and erosion, increased probability of landslides, changes in groundwater levels, shifts in native and invasive species distribution, performance, and phenology; and changes in oceanic and atmospheric chemistry (Rockman et al. 2016; Commonwealth of Massachusetts 2023: 5.1-31–5.1-61).

The phenomena listed above may produce a variety of adverse impacts to Massachusetts' cultural resources. Sensitivity and potential impacts vary based on resource category (i.e., archaeological sites, cultural landscapes, ethnographic landscapes and sites, and buildings and structures). Resource-specific factors such as location, design, materials, condition, etc. will also influence sensitivity and consequent impacts. All categories of cultural resources may be subject to complete or partial destruction through wildfire, inland flooding, sea level rise, storm surge, or landslides. Additionally, these resource categories may be subject to other types of impacts, as follows. Archaeological sites may have site stratigraphy disrupted by changes in hydrography, may suffer accelerated decomposition of artifacts and features, and may be impacted inadvertently during disaster response. Cultural landscapes may lose plantings due to a variety of stressors (e.g., drought or flood, pests, soil salinity), may be infiltrated by invasives, may be eroded by surface runoff, may experience more rapid deterioration of hardscaping and site furnishings, and may be damaged by high wind or heavy snow events. Ethnographic landscapes, traditional cultural places, and associated communities (including Indigenous peoples) may suffer both tangible and intangible impacts such as loss or diminishment of natural species used for food, ceremony, or medicine; alterations in timing of hunts, etc.; increased difficulty of vulnerable subgroups (e.g., the elderly) to perform outdoor tasks; and a loss of cultural knowledge associated with resources and practices. Buildings and structures may be damaged or destroyed by high wind or heavy snow events, suffer accelerated deterioration through a variety of mechanisms (e.g., elevated humidity, chemical reactions, destructive pests and organisms), may be destabilized by hydrological changes, or be damaged by inadequate gutters or drainage systems (ICOMOS Climate Change and Cultural Heritage Working Group 2019: 73–89; Rockman et al. 2016: 20–24). (See Rockman et al. 2016: 19–24 for a detailed assessment of the potential impacts of climate change on cultural resources.)

Cultural Resources—Property-Specific Exposure and Impacts

No cultural resources with known elevated exposure or sensitivity to potential consequences of climate change were identified at this property.

Recreation—General Impacts

Outdoor recreation and park visitation are dependent on weather and climate and will be affected by a warming climate (Wilkins and Horne 2024). Higher temperatures positively affect participation in most outdoor activities, except snow-based activities (Wilkins and Horne 2024). “Winter is warming substantially faster than other seasons, and winter warming is especially pronounced in the...Northeastern United States” (Wilkins and Horne 2024: 15). Exposure to this climate change phenomenon is projected to significantly reduce the length of winter recreation seasons for downhill skiing, cross-country skiing, and snowmobiling, decreasing recreational opportunities and causing substantial economic impacts (Wobus et al. 2017). Whitewater rafting, primitive area use, and hunting are also projected to be negatively impacted by exposure changing weather patterns associated with

climate change (Askew and Bowker 2018). Although “coldwater fishing habitat is expected to decline under a warming climate, which will likely result in fewer fishing days,” overall fishing participation in the Northeast is projected to rise “due to the more favorable temperatures” (Wilkins and Horne 2024: 11). Horseback riding on trails, boating, swimming, and visiting interpretive sites are also expected to see higher participation in the Northeast under climate change (Askew and Bowker 2018). Temperature preferences of campers indicate that the “number of ideal days” for camping will also increase (Wilkins and Horne 2024: 13). Participation in biking is also projected to increase, especially in the winter and shoulder months (Wilkins and Horne 2024: 13). Climate change may also impact outdoor recreation through increased impacts to recreation infrastructure (e.g., flooding impacts), and increased exposure to disease vectors (e.g., mosquitoes and ticks), longer pollen seasons, and heat-related illnesses (O’Toole et al. 2019).

Recreation—Property-Specific Exposure and Impacts

Hunting is the primary recreation activity at the Forest likely to be negatively impacted by exposure to weather changes resulting from climate change. Mountain biking may experience increased participation due the anticipated increase in temperature (i.e., more than 30 additional days with temperatures over 90° F; Table 10).

APPLIED LAND STEWARDSHIP ZONING

DCR assesses the appropriate uses and stewardship of its properties at two spatial scales: the landscape level and the property level.

Landscape Designation

In 2012, DCR engaged in a comprehensive system-wide assessment of lands managed by its Division of State Parks and Recreation, designating them as Reserve, Woodland, or Parkland. (See Landscape Designations for DCR Parks & Forests: Selection Criteria and Management Guidelines (DCR 2012) for details.) Multiple Landscape Designations may apply to individual properties with diverse resources and levels of development. Most of Sutton State Forest has a Landscape Designation of Woodland. Approximately 262 acres immediately west of Mendon Road was designated Parkland. Identification of Land Stewardship Zones within Sutton was performed in the context of these designations.

The following Land Stewardship Zoning is recommended to guide management and any future development. (See Figure 1. Land Stewardship Zoning Map, page 21, and the Land Stewardship Zoning layer on DCR’s Stewardship Map: <https://dcrsgis-mass-eoea.hub.arcgis.com/>.)

Zone 1

Zone 1 areas have highly sensitive ecological and/or cultural resources that require additional management approaches and practices to protect and preserve these special features and their values (DCR 2012). The following areas of Sutton have been designated Zone 1.

- No areas within the Forest have been designated Zone 1.

Zone 2

Zone 2 areas provide for a balance between resource stewardship and recreational opportunities that can be appropriately sustained. They include stable yet important cultural and natural resources. These areas provide a buffer for sensitive resources, recharge areas for surface and groundwaters, and large

areas where existing public recreation activities can be managed at sustainable levels (DCR 2012). The following areas of Sutton have been designated Zone 2.

- All portions of the Forest, with the exception of areas identified as Zone 3.

Zone 3

Zone 3 areas include altered landscapes in active use and areas suitable for future administrative, maintenance, and recreation areas (DCR 2012). The following areas of Sutton are currently developed, appropriate for potential future development, or intensively used for recreation. They have been designated Zone 3.

- The former Waters Airport, solely for the possible implementation of active agriculture. If the former airfield is managed for purposes other than agriculture (e.g., as early successional wildlife habitat), it should be managed as Zone 2.
- An approximately 100-foot-wide strip on the south side of Mendon Road, for the possible construction of a formal gateway, with parking lot and trailhead, for the Forest. Regulatory review and permitting will occur before any activity at this area.

Significant Feature Overlay

Significant Feature Overlays provide precise management guidance in order to maintain or preserve recognized resources features regardless of the zone in which they occur. The following Significant Feature Overlays were developed for Sutton State Forest:

- **National Register Overlay.** This overlay includes all National Register of Historic Places listed resources within the Forest's boundary. This includes the following:
 - Manchaug Village National Register Historic District (Broomer et al. 2018).Resources within this overlay that contribute to the significance of this National Register-listed district are to be managed in accordance with M.G.L. c. 9, § 27; applicable DCR BMPs for historic and/or archaeological resources, The Secretary of the Interior's (SOI) Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (Grimmer 2017), and, where applicable, the SOI's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Landscapes (Birnbaum and Peters 1996). Proposed management activities, construction and maintenance projects, and forestry projects within the overlay, including all ground-disturbing activities, should be reviewed by the DCR Office of Cultural Resources to determine whether cultural resources that contribute to the significance of the National Register-listed property will be impacted.
- **Wellhead Protection Overlay.** This overlay includes the portion of Manchaug Water District's Zone I Wellhead Protection Area within the Forest. Within this overlay, activities must be consistent with Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) Guidance (MassDEP 2011) and should be consistent with Wellhead Protection Tips (MassDEP 1995).

DCR STEWARDSHIP MAP TOOL

This RMP should be viewed in conjunction with DCR's Stewardship Map, a GIS-based tool that allows users to view a property's natural, cultural, and recreational resources. The Stewardship Map tool is dynamic, and information continues to be updated after adoption of an RMP. Guidance for using the

tool, as well as Best Management Practices for resource stewardship, are located on the Stewardship Map site: <https://dcrsgis-mass-eoeaa.hub.arcgis.com/>.

Because authorized trails are located within known habitat of state-listed species on this property, managers should consult an additional GIS-based tool, the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) 2022 Guidance Codes for DCR Trail Maintenance Map. (<https://mass-eoeaa.maps.arcgis.com/home/item.html?id=cb252e8df40d408c81fe8fcf690e14f6>) This tool allows users to select specific trail segments and identify restrictions and regulatory review associated with performing 10 common trail maintenance activities on these segments. Because site-specific rare species information is confidential under Massachusetts law (M.G.L. c. 66, §17D), access to this tool is restricted.

CONSISTENCY REVIEW

Resource Management Plans “shall ensure consistency between recreation, resource protection, and sustainable forest management” (M.G.L. c. 21, § 2F). For planning purposes, an activity is considered consistent with resource protection if it has no significant, long-term, adverse impact on resources. To this end, a series of indicators were developed to evaluate the impacts of recreation and forest management on natural and cultural resources.

Many activities with the potential to negatively affect resources are already subject to agency and/or regulatory review (e.g., forest management activities, projects within Priority Habitat). For these activities, compliance with state regulations, regulatory authority guidance, DCR policies and processes, and Best Management Practices (BMPs) is considered an indicator of consistency between park use and resource protection. New indicators were generated for activities not subject to agency or regulatory review, and are based on available data, information readily identifiable via aerial imagery or site visits, assessments by DCR subject matter experts, or the property manager’s knowledge of park conditions and use. (See Table 17, page 22.)

Indicators are applied during the RMP planning process in order to ensure a standardized assessment of consistency across all properties in the DCR system. Inconsistencies identified via the application of indicators are used to inform the development of management recommendations.

The status of indicators (Yes, No, Unknown, and N/A) were accurate at the time this RMP was prepared and were used for planning purposes. However, they represent a snapshot in time and may not reflect future conditions. In addition, the status of indicators will change as recommendations get implemented.

MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Fourteen priority management recommendations were developed for the Forest. They are presented in the Table 18, page 25. All recommendations are of equal importance.

Priority management recommendations derive from Threats, Opportunities, and Consistency Assessment information presented in this RMP. For a recommendation to be considered a priority and listed in the table, it must meet one or more of the criteria listed below. Maintenance and management needs not meeting one or more of these criteria are not included in the table but are identified in the Threats and Opportunities sections.

The following types of recommendations are considered priority:

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- Natural resource stewardship and restoration activities consistent with park identity and intended to improve ecological function and connectivity.
- Cultural resource management activities consistent with park identity and intended to prevent the loss of integrity of significant cultural resources.
- Improvements consistent with park identity that are needed to support intended park activities.
- Actions required for regulatory compliance or compliance with legal agreements.
- Activities that prevent or ameliorate threats to the health and safety of park visitors and employees.
- Activities that address inconsistencies among recreation, resource protection, and sustainable forest management, as identified through use of the Consistency Assessment checklist.

Progress toward implementing priority recommendations is tracked through the use of DCR's Capital Asset Management Information System (CAMIS). The property manager should enter each recommendation listed in Table 18 (page 25) into CAMIS as a separate work order, noting "*RMP" in the description field. Non-traditional work orders (e.g., volunteer trail work, posting of DPH Fish Consumption Advisory posters, certification of vernal pools) should be closed out by the property manager, once the recommendation has been implemented.

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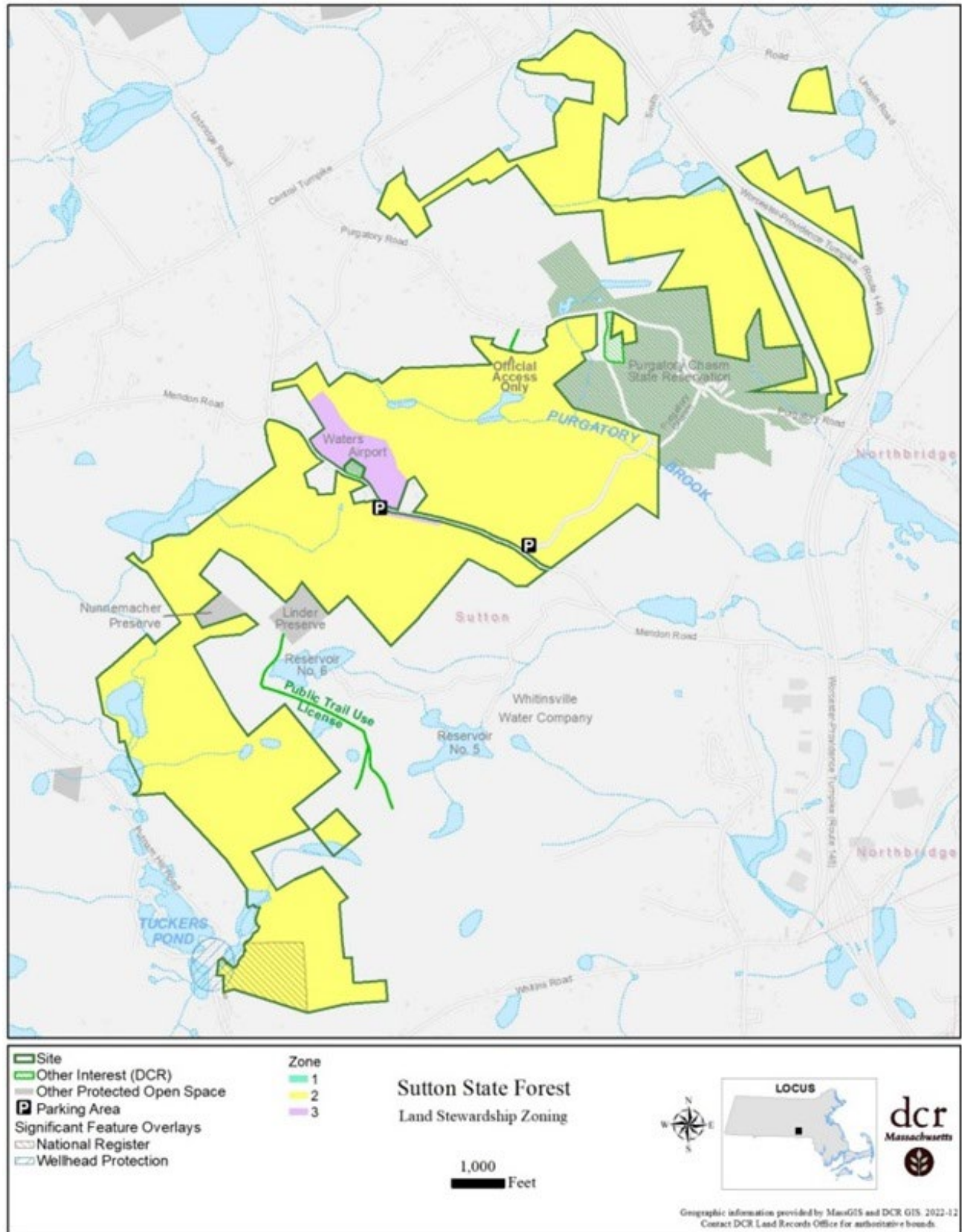


Figure 1. Land Stewardship Zoning Map.

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Table 17. Consistency Assessment for Sutton State Forest. This assessment represents a snapshot in time and may not reflect future conditions.

Category	Metric	Status
Landscape Designation	1. All development and uses of the park since 2012, or currently planned for the park, are consistent with its Landscape Designation(s).	Yes
Natural Resources	1. All projects (normal maintenance activities, special projects, volunteer projects) conducted within Priority Habitat were reviewed and approved through DCR's internal review process and by NHESP for potential impacts to rare species and their habitats.	Yes
Natural Resources	2. All projects conducted within areas subject to state and/or federal wetlands or waterways regulations were reviewed and approved through DCR's internal review process; reviewed and approved through the appropriate, local, state, and/or federal review process; and were carried out in accordance with the terms of a valid permit.	No
Natural Resources	3. Sensitive resource areas, such as steep slopes, riverbanks, streambanks, pond and lakeshores, wetlands, and dunes are free of desire paths and other user-created trails.	No
Natural Resources	4. Aquatic areas adjacent to beaches, boat ramps and launches, roads, and hiking trails are free of eroded sediments.	No
Natural Resources	5. The extent of exposed soil in campground and/or picnic sites is stable or decreasing.	N/A
Natural Resources	6. The extent of native vegetation in campground and/or picnic sites is stable or increasing. (As assessed by property manager.)	N/A
Natural Resources	7. Area of trail impacts in Reserves is less than 50% of total area. (See Naughton (2021) for information on primary area of trail impacts.)	N/A
Natural Resources	8. Congregations of breeding, migratory, or wintering wildlife are protected from disturbance by temporary (e.g., seasonal) restrictions on recreational access.	N/A
Natural Resources	9. Geocaches, letterboxes, orienteering control locations, and other discovery destinations are located outside sensitive natural resource areas and their locations have been reviewed and approved by park personnel. (As assessed by property manager.)	No

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Category	Metric	Status
Natural Resources	10. Zone I wellhead protection areas are free of vehicle parking, chemical storage, or concentrated recreation.	Yes
Natural Resources	11. All boat ramps and launches have cleaning stations and/or educational signs and materials on preventing the spread of aquatic invasive organisms. (As assessed by property manager.)	N/A
Natural Resources	12. For each barrier beach there is a current, approved Barrier Beach Management Plan and all beach-related activities are conducted in accordance with this plan.	N/A
Cultural Resources	1. All maintenance activities and projects with the potential to cause sub-surface disturbance are being reviewed by the DCR archaeologist for potential impacts to archaeological resources.	No
Cultural Resources	2. All maintenance activities and projects affecting historic properties (buildings, structures, and landscapes over 50-years-old) are being reviewed by the Office of Cultural Resources to avoid adverse impacts.	N/A
Cultural Resources	3. Historic buildings, structures, and landscapes are being used, maintained, and repaired in a manner that preserves their cultural integrity and conveys their historic significance to park visitors.	Yes
Cultural Resources	4. Recreational activities such as hiking, biking, and boating are not eroding cultural properties such as archaeological sites or historic landscapes through creation of desire lines, rutting in the landscape, damage to historic built features, or excessive scouring (erosion) of coastal and shoreline areas.	No
Cultural Resources	5. Geocaches, letterboxes, and other discovery destinations are located away from sensitive cultural resources, and their locations have been reviewed and approved by park personnel.	No
Cultural Resources	6. Historic buildings, structures, landscapes, archaeological sites, and concentrations of historic resources are located outside of areas predicted to be subject to flooding, storm surge, or sea-level rise.	N/A

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Category	Metric	Status
Recreation	1. Types of recreation, levels of recreational use, and types and extent of recreation infrastructure are consistent with the park's identity statement.	No
Recreation	2. Trail density is consistent with the park's Landscape Designation(s). (See Trails Guidelines and Best Practices Manual (DCR 2019a) for density thresholds.)	No
Recreation	3. All authorized trail construction was performed in accordance with an approved Trail Proposal Form.	No
Recreation	4. Over 90% of the park's official trails network is classified as being in Fair or better condition.	Yes
Recreation	5. Recurring use by OHVs is restricted to authorized trails. (As assessed by property manager.)	N/A
Recreation	6. There is a high level of compliance with dog leash regulations and policies. (As assessed by property manager.)	Yes
Recreation	7. Athletic fields are free of recreation-caused impacts (e.g., bare spots) to turf. (As assessed by property manager.)	N/A
Recreation	8. Water-based recreation is consistent with "Uses Attained" designation as identified by MassDEP in its most current integrated list of waters (e.g., MassDEP 2023); DPH fish consumption advisories; and/or water quality testing at waterfront areas.	N/A
Recreation	9. Recreation facilities are located outside of areas subject to flooding, storm surge, or sea-level rise.	Yes
Sustainable Forest Management	1. Forestry activities are consistent with Landscape Designation and associated forestry guidelines.	Yes
Sustainable Forest Management	2. Forestry activities are consistent with current Forest Resource Management Plan.	N/A
Sustainable Forest Management	3. Tree cutting is performed in accordance with an approved cutting plan, if required under the Massachusetts Forest Cutting Practices Act (M.G.L. Ch. 132, Sections 40–46).	N/A

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Table 18. Priority Recommendations for Sutton State Forest. All recommendations are of equal importance. When multiple parties are responsible for implementing a recommendation, they are identified parenthetically in the Implementation column. Property managers should enter these recommendations as work orders in CAMIS to ensure their tracking and implementation.

Category	Recommendation	Implementation
Natural Resources	Develop a vision for the future of the former Waters Airport. Consult with MassWildlife and the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, as appropriate.	Office of Cultural Resources (Co-Lead), Office of Natural Resources (Co-Lead), Park Operations (Co-Lead), Partner
Natural Resources	Survey, document, and submit documentation to certify potential vernal pools that are in NHESP habitat of MESA-protected vernal pool obligate species and in Woodland portions of the Forest, in accordance with DCR (n.d.a) and MassWildlife (2009), as warranted.	Office of Natural Resources (Lead), Volunteers
Cultural Resources	Work with Indigenous partners to inventory, document, conserve, and interpret Indigenous peoples' resources and history within the Forest.	Office of Cultural Resources (Lead), Partner
Cultural Resources	Remove vegetation from the Sibley Mill Site, and manage on an ongoing basis, in accordance with Archaeological Features BMP (DCR n.d.b).	Office of Cultural Resources, Park Operations (Lead)
Cultural Resources	Conduct a reconnaissance survey of the granite quarry in the Manchaug Village NRHD to collect data on the property's history and known and potential significant cultural features.	Office of Cultural Resources
Recreation	Establish a DCR web page for Sutton State Forest.	Interpretive Services, Park Operations, Regional Staff Lead), Web Content Creator
Recreation	Establish a Forest gateway area with parking, Identification Sign, Welcome Wayside, and kiosk.	Interpretive Services, Landscape Architecture Section (Lead), Park Operations

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Category	Recommendation	Implementation
Recreation	Resolve trail-related threats and opportunities identified in this RMP, in accordance with Trails Guidelines and Best Practices (DCR 2019, or update), through the following actions: • Maintain authorized trails, as identified in the DCR Trail Data Layer provided to the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program in 2021, and in accordance with the Recreational Trail Maintenance and Biodiversity Conservation 2021 update. • Evaluate trail segments for discontinuation or active closure, including those that are: unauthorized, unsafe, connecting to privately-owned property, located in environmentally or culturally sensitive areas, or otherwise inconsistent with DCR Trails Guidelines and Best Practices. Provide an updated trail data layer to the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program. • Establish new trails, as warranted, following regulatory review. Provide an updated trail data layer to the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program.	Office of Cultural Resources, Office of Natural Resources, Park Operations (Co-Lead), Partners, Trails and Greenways Section (Co-Lead)
Recreation	Develop and distribute a trail map, install intersection signs and reassurance markers and blazes, and remove unauthorized signs to improve navigation, encourage the use of authorized trails, and help protect resources.	Park Operations (Co-Lead), Trails and Greenways Section (Co-Lead)
Recreation	Post signs and regularly monitor trail activity and maintain trails along the 1-mile-long trail corridor through WWC property in accordance with the terms of the license agreement.	Park Operations (Lead), Partner, Trails and Greenways Section, Volunteers
Recreation	Discourage use of the Forest as a conduit for mountain bikes to access WWC property by providing information to visitors on property boundaries and regulations.	Field Operations (Lead), Partners, Trails and Greenways Section

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Category	Recommendation	Implementation
Recreation	Evaluate unauthorized trails leading off DCR property for either discontinuation and active closure, or for authorization with adjacent landowner permission, if appropriate.	Park Operations (Lead), Trails and Greenways Section
Recreation	Provide information about Sutton State Forest on Purgatory Chasm's kiosks and at the Visitor Center.	Interpretive Services (Co-Lead), Park Operations (Co-Lead)
Recreation	Using existing trails and forest roads, establish a connector trail to Purgatory Chasm State Reservation from the Sutton State Forest Trailhead on Mendon Road. Install distance and direction signs from the Sutton State Forest trailhead to Purgatory Chasm and the Purgatory Chasm Visitor Center.	Park Operations (Lead), Trails and Greenways Section

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