



# Resource Management Plan Fall River Heritage State Park



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Adopted by the DCR Stewardship Council December 2023

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

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Maura T. Healey, Governor  
Kimberley Driscoll, Lieutenant Governor  
Rebecca L. Tepper, Secretary  
Brian Arrigo, Commissioner

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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. Chapter 21: Section 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 Native people 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](http://www.mass.gov/dcr). Contact us at [mass.parks@state.ma.us](mailto:mass.parks@state.ma.us).



# Fall River Heritage State Park

South Region

South Coast District

Fall River Heritage Complex

## PARK OVERVIEW

<b>Date Established</b>	1981
<b>Location</b>	Fall River
<b>Landscape Designation (acres)</b>	
Parkland	9.3
Reserve	0.0
Woodland	0.0
Undesignated	0.0
<b>Park Size (acres)</b>	9.3
<b>Boundary Length (miles)</b>	1.1
<b>Annual Attendance (2021)</b>	32,901
<b>Regulatory Designations (acres)</b>	
None Identified	N/A
<b>Environmental Justice (acres)</b>	9.3

## LONG-TERM AGREEMENTS

USS Massachusetts Memorial Committee	2032
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## CONCESSIONS

- None

## PARTNERS & FRIENDS

- [Fall River Carousel](#)
- [Greater Fall River RE-CREATION, Inc.](#)
- [USS Massachusetts Memorial Committee, Inc.](#)

## FEATURES OF INTEREST

- Carousel
- Picnic facilities
- Robert Correia Boardwalk
- Scenic views of Battleship Cove
- Scenic views of Taunton River
- Visitor Center

## ACTIVITIES

- Arts (\$)
  - Boating, sail
  - Dog walking, on-leash
  - Educational Programs
  - Festivals
  - Heritage tourism
  - Photography
  - Picnicking
  - Riding the Fall River Carousel (\$)
  - Running/jogging
  - Walking
- \$ - A fee may be associated with this activity.

### Contact Info:

100 Davol Street, Fall River, MA 02720

<https://www.mass.gov/locations/fall-river-heritage-state-park>

<b>NATURAL RESOURCES</b>	
<b>Elevation (feet)</b>	5.9–16.1
<b>Water Resources</b>	
Watershed(s)	Taunton, Mt. Hope Bay
Rivers and Streams (miles)	0.6
Open Water (acres)	0.3
Wetlands (acres)	0.0
Certified Vernal Pools (#)	0
Potential Vernal Pools (#)	0
<b>Threatened &amp; Endangered Species</b>	
State-Listed (# Regulatory)	0
State-Listed (# Non-Regulatory)	0
Federally Listed (#)	0
<b>Forest Cover (acres)</b>	0.0
<b>Known Invasive Plants (# species)</b>	
Aquatic	0
Terrestrial	0
<b>CLIMATE CHANGE (BY 2070)</b>	
Increase in annual days over 90° F	>30
Change in annual maximum daily rainfall (inches)	>10
Massachusetts Coastal Flood Risk Model area of inundation (acres)	9.3
<b>NATURAL HAZARDS (ACRES)</b>	
Flood (1.0%–0.2%-chance)	9.3–9.3
Hurricane Inundation (Cat. 1–4)	2.6–8.9
<b>FOREST MANAGEMENT</b>	
(OBJECTIVE AND ACRES MANAGED, SINCE 2012)	
N/A	0.0

<b>CULTURAL RESOURCES (#)</b>	
<b>Archaeological</b>	0
<b>Historic (total #)</b>	1
National Register Listed	0
National Historic Landmark	0
<b>RECREATION RESOURCES</b>	
Boat House	1
Healthy Heart Trail	1
Picnic Area	1
Scenic Viewing Area	1
Visitor Center	1
<b>ROADS &amp; TRAILS</b>	
<b>Roads (miles)</b>	
Unpaved	0.0
Paved	0.4
<b>Forest Roads (miles)</b>	
Unpaved	0.0
Paved	0.0
<b>Trails</b>	
Unpaved (miles)	0.5
Paved (miles)	0.4
Unauthorized Trails (miles)	0.0
Trail Density (miles/acre)	0.142
Area of Impact (acres)	9.3
<b>PARKING</b>	
<b>Lots (#)</b>	3
<b>Parking Spaces (#)</b>	175
Accessible (HP)	8
Restricted	5
Other	162
<b>INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMMING</b>	
(#PROGRAMS/#CONTACTS)	
<b>Formal Programming (2019)</b>	
DCR	400/12,070
Partners	40/10,965

## **INTRODUCTION**

Fall River Heritage State Park (Fall River Heritage or the Park) is located in the City of Fall River (the City), on the east bank of the Taunton River. It straddles, via a pedestrian bridge, the mouth of the Quequechan River in a densely urbanized area along the City's waterfront. The Park, like all other DCR properties in the Fall River Heritage Complex, is in the Bristol Lowlands/Narragansett Lowlands Ecoregion. Fall River Heritage is approximately 40 miles south of Boston and 15 miles southeast of Providence, Rhode Island. The Park is bounded on the west by the Taunton River, on the south by industrial and commercial development, and on the east by Davol Street. The latter is undergoing corridor improvements to better connect urban residential neighborhoods to the east with the City's waterfront.

Fall River Heritage is one of four DCR parks located along the Taunton River, a Wild and Scenic River that extends 40 miles from its headwaters in Bridgewater to its outlet at Mount Hope Bay. The other DCR properties along the Taunton are Massasoit State Park (25.5 miles upriver), Sweets Knoll State Park (9.0 miles upriver), and Dighton Rock State Park (8.0 miles upriver).

The Park is on land shaped by generations of Native peoples and non-Native inhabitants. Past and present Native residents embody fluid, relational connections to the places and spaces now known as Fall River Heritage State Park. Groups and individuals, including Native people known as the Pocasset, are recorded in available documentation (Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) 1982) as having relationships to this place over seasons and generations. Native people sites "would have congregated along the eastern edge of the Taunton and Quequechan Rivers" (MHC 1982), an area that includes the location of Fall River Heritage. Following Native people dispossession, the Town (now City) of Fall River was incorporated in 1803 (MHC 1982). Land for Fall River Heritage was acquired in 1981 and the Park opened to the public in 1984.

Fall River Heritage is one of nine extant DCR Heritage State Parks. The first of these, Lowell Heritage State Park, was authorized by the Massachusetts Legislature in 1976; others soon followed. The objectives of Heritage State Parks were threefold: 1) the creation of quality downtown open space; 2) the celebration of each community's cultural heritage; and 3) the stimulation of private economic development. Fall River Heritage's theme is "the heritage of textiles," with emphasis on "the growth of Fall River into the greatest textile producer in the country - and the people who made it happen" (DEM 1981). The Park interprets the City's industrial past and provides visitors water access and views, open space, public art exhibits, and multi-partner art events and festivals. Benches, picnic tables, walkways, and ornamental plantings are located throughout the park grounds, making it a delightful place to attend an event, enjoy the scenery, or picnic by the river. An estimated 32,901 people visited this park in 2021, including 5,000 on the Fourth of July.

## **PARK IDENTITY AND SIGNIFICANCE**

Fall River Heritage is an important part of the Fall River community, telling the story of the Fall River's industrial history, providing access to its waterfront, and serving as a venue for cultural and civic events. It is characterized by the Taunton and Quequechan rivers and surrounding infrastructure that reflects the city's industrial past and current post-industrial economy. The Park's focal point is its Visitor Center, which provides permanent exhibits and interpretive programming that tell the stories of immigration from around the world to Fall River and of the area's historic resources. It also offers a variety of recreational resources, community events, and concerts. Future uses and development of Fall River

## *Resource Management Plan: Fall River Heritage State Park*

Heritage should be consistent with its identity as a Heritage State Park, its role in the community, and its location on the Taunton River.

Fall River Heritage is significant for the following reasons:

- As a beautiful urban park providing a waterfront oasis for the Fall River and serving as the city's esplanade.
- It is one of nine Heritage State Parks in the Commonwealth, and the only one in southeastern Massachusetts.
- It tells the story of the textile industry in America, from its birth and use of waterpower, to Fall River's heyday as the leading cotton textile city in America and a leading industrial city in the world.
- It is at the heart of the Fall River Waterfront Cultural District. Adjacent to the Park along the waterfront are most of the city's leading cultural institutions and destinations including Gates of the City, Battleship Cove, the Maritime Museum, Senator Thomas Norton City Pier, the Narrows Performing Arts Center, Veteran's Memorial Bicentennial Park, Arts Overlay District, and the Columbia Street Historic District.
- The Park provides recreational amenities to, and enhances environmental quality and equity for, an Environmental Justice (EJ) community.

### **DEFINING RESOURCES AND VALUES**

Resources that define the Park are related to the industrial history of Fall River, its location on the Taunton River, and the revitalization of the city's waterfront. They include:

- A Visitor Center with an auditorium featuring a multiscreen slide and sound entertainment program about the growth of Fall River into the greatest textile producer in the country, and the people who made it happen.
- A riverside multi-use path that extends approximately one mile, from the south side of Fall River Heritage to the city's Veteran's Memorial Bicentennial Park. Approximately three-tenths of a mile of this path is within Fall River Heritage. This path is part of the proposed 22-mile-long Taunton River Trail that, when completed, will connect Fall River Heritage to Sweets Knoll State Park via a combination of on-road bike lanes and off-road paths.
- Views westward across the Taunton River, past the Battleship Massachusetts and other historic navy vessels berthed in Battleship Cove, to the Town of Somerset and beyond.
- The Park's open space and "Meadow," an approximately one-acre area of lawn and ornamental plantings. These spaces serve as the home of some of the city's largest outdoor public events, including fairs, concerts, and Fourth of July celebration, as well as the site of informal recreation activities.
- Affordable sailing lessons on the Taunton River are offered by DCR partner Sail-Rec!, a non-profit sailing school operated by Greater Fall River RE-CREATION. This program is housed in DCR facilities within the Park.
- Fall River Heritage is one of three DCR parks with a carousel.
- A monument to Fall River poet, John Teixeira de Medeiros, is located east of the Visitor Center. It is a copy of a monument located along the waterfront of Nordeste, Sao Miguel, Azores. This monument

was a gift from the Azorean government to the people of Fall River and honors the Azorean and larger Portuguese heritage of the city.

### **INTERPRETIVE THEMES**

Fall River Heritage State Park embraces the industrial and cultural heritage of Fall River from its heyday as the textile capital of the United States in the late 1800's and early 1900's, to the present as a post-industrial city struggling to re-invent itself. From its roots as a Pocasset settlement, to its colonial beginnings as an outlying farming village of the Plymouth colony, through the textile years, and the rise of an urban culture welcoming scores of immigrants from throughout the world, Fall River has always been a welcoming place of transformation.

### **VISITOR EXPERIENCE**

Fall River Heritage provides a variety of visitor experiences, including the following:

- **Virtual Experience.** Potential visitors will find detailed information about Fall River Heritage on DCR's web site. The Park has its own web page that provides potential visitors information needed to plan a visit. (<https://www.mass.gov/locations/fall-river-heritage-state-park>)
- **Entering the Park.** Visitors arriving from the north enter the park through a well-maintained landscape to gain access to the boat house and boardwalk; they are afforded broad views of the Taunton River. Those arriving by vehicle from the south park in the 5 Water Street lot before crossing a pedestrian bridge over the Quequechan River to access the Visitor Center and boardwalk. The Water Street lot is also used to access the carousel and Battleship Cove.
- **Visitor Center.** Officially designated the Visitor Center in the Captain Thomas Hudner Jr. Memorial Building, the Visitor Center provides essential services for park visitors. It serves as the central point from which visitors may obtain information before exploring the park. It also serves as a gathering spot for park-related meetings and programming. Interpretive exhibits, including the Threads of Fall River permanent exhibit, and films such as The Fabric of Fall River: Self-Portrait of a City introduce visitors to Fall River's colorful history.
- **Picnicking.** A small picnic grove provides visitors the opportunity to pause beneath shade trees and enjoy views of the Taunton River.
- **Sailing.** Visitors can learn to sail with Sail Rec!, an affordable, accessible, customizable, educational, and fun way for new sailors to gain confidence and captain their own vessel on the river, in a safe and nurturing environment (Greater Fall River RE-CREATION, Inc. 2019). This program is based out of the Park's boathouse.
- **Scenic Tourism.** Visitors are often attracted to the park for its multiple scenic views. It is a great spot to sit along the Taunton River and look out to Braga Bridge and Battleship Cove.
- **Bicentennial Trail.** An approximately one-mile-long trail along the east bank of the Taunton River extends from the north side of the Quequechan River to the City of Fall River's Veteran's Memorial Park. Within Fall River Heritage, this trail consists of the Robert Correia Boardwalk. North of the Park it consists of the City's Bicentennial Boardwalk. The combined trails offer visitors scenic views of the river while engaged in walking, running, or hiking, and an option to explore two parks in one trip. Bicycling and fishing are prohibited on the Correia Boardwalk but are allowed along the City's Bicentennial Trail. The entire length of this trail is part of the Taunton River Trail, a proposed 22-mile-

long bicycle and pedestrian trail that, when completed, will connect Sweets Knoll State Park to Fall River Heritage State Park.

- **Special Events.** To many visitors, the Park is primarily an outdoor venue for arts and cultural events. In the summer, Fall River offers outdoor concerts, cultural festivals, outdoor movies, and free or fee performances. The park also provides an ideal location to spend the Fourth of July, taking in concerts, patronizing food trucks, and watching fireworks.
- **Riding the Carousel.** Fall River Carousel owns and operates a carousel and creamery in a building on park grounds. For a nominal charge, visitors ride on a historic carousel manufactured by the Philadelphia Toboggan Company in 1920. Private and corporate events also attract visitors to the carousel building.

### **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. Part I, Title II, Chapter 21, Sections 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 Priority Recommendations (Table 2, page 21).

#### **Natural Resources**

##### ***Threats***

- Trees are dying throughout the park due to storm impacts and age.
- Grass in the meadow is wearing thin due to overuse. In addition, the Meadow appears to be sinking due to the settling of fill.
- The Visitor Center was constructed in 1983 with an all-electric heating system; the main lobby and auditorium were later retrofitted with a gas-fired HVAC system, “without much improvement” (HKT Architects, Inc. 2021). This system is inefficient, expensive to operate, and generates greenhouse gases.
- The Visitor Center’s nearly 40-year-old windows and doors have failed seals and gaskets that allow for the loss of heat from the building (HKT Architects, Inc. 2021).
- Some Park patrons feed wildlife (e.g., ducks and swans), a practice in violation of DCR regulations (302 C.M.R. 12.13(12)) and discouraged by MassWildlife, which notes that the practice typically does more harm than good.
- The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) has identified several water quality impairments in the section of the Taunton River (MA62-04) adjacent to Fall River Heritage (MassDEP 2023a), resulting in this stretch of the river being classified as not suitable habitat for sustaining a native, naturally diverse community of aquatic flora and fauna (MassDEP 2023b).

## *Resource Management Plan: Fall River Heritage State Park*

Because MassDEP updates its Integrated List of Waters on a regular basis, readers are directed to refer to the most recent version of that document for current information.

### ***Opportunities***

- Incorporating the results of DCR’s 2022 Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment into future planning, design, and construction at this park can make it more resilient to projected climate impacts.
- DCR’s Greening the Gateway Cities program has experience planting and maintaining trees in urban settings, including in Fall River. Knowledge gained through this program may be applied to the selection, planting, and maintenance of trees at Fall River Heritage.
- The park’s location along the Wild and Scenic Taunton River provides an excellent opportunity to further educate the public about the river’s natural and cultural histories.
- In recent years, pollinator gardens have been established at the Park. Opportunities exist to expand this program in the Park as part of DCR’s Growing Wild Massachusetts initiative. The planting of taller, native plants will discourage use of these areas by Canada geese.
- An assessment of the Visitor Center (HKT Architects, Inc. 2021) identified ways to decarbonize the building, including replacing existing heating and cooling systems with a Variable Refrigerant Flow fan coil system and heat pump, lighting changes, improvements to the building envelope, and the addition of solar panels and canopies. These improvements would result in the Visitor Center becoming a net energy generator, at an estimated cost of \$10,500,000–\$19,300,000.
- Visitor Center’s heating and cooling systems provide an opportunity to decrease carbon emissions caused by heating and cooling the building.

### **Cultural Resources**

#### ***Threats***

- A small brick building at the entrance to the Central Street parking lot appears to be historic, dating to the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. However, little is known about the history of this building that is owned by DCR and used by Battleship Cove. Research is needed into the date of construction and original purpose of this resource.
- The roof of the small brick building at the entrance to the Central Street parking lot is deteriorating. The lack of clear use/management responsibility threatens this resource.
- The Park has not been systematically surveyed for archaeological resources; any below ground impacts could negatively impact archaeological resources.

#### ***Opportunities***

- Several interpretive opportunities are viewable from the Park grounds and boardwalk, presenting an opportunity to develop content that connects visitors to the Park, City of Fall River, and the Taunton River.

## **Recreation**

### ***Threats***

- The “Meadow” attracts Canada geese, which defecate in the open space, creating an unwelcoming environment and preventing visitors from being able to enjoying outdoor events and programs.
- There are multiple leaks in the Visitor Center roof.
- Audio/visual equipment in the Visitor Center’s auditorium/theater is old and prone to breaking. Obtaining repairs and replacement parts may take several months, during which time the audio/visual equipment is out of service.
- In 2015, the Visitor Center’s interpretive displays were assessed, and recommended updates identified. Only some of these updates have been implemented.
- The Visitor Center’s internal configuration is not conducive to park management and visitor needs. Office space is insufficient for DCR staff and acoustics in the main room are poor.
- The entire park, including all infrastructure, is within the flood velocity zone. This zone is subject to inundation by the 1.0%-chance flood, with additional damage due to storm-induced velocity wave action.
- Fall River Heritage is located on the mouth of the Taunton River at Mount Hope Bay and is potentially exposed to a variety of natural hazards. Approximately 28% of the Park is exposed to hurricane inundation during Category 1 storms, and approximately 96% is exposed during Category 4 storms. The parking lot off Central Street and walkway around the Visitor Center are within this area of exposure. The Visitor Center, Boat House, parking lots, and all walkways are within the area exposed to Category 3 and greater storms.
- Wooden pilings needed for the youth sailing program are rotting and in need of replacement.
- The sea wall along the north side of the Central Street parking lot is deteriorating. If left unrepaired, it will result in decreased parking.
- Although there have been many universal access improvements to the Park, the picnic area is still not accessible.
- Unauthorized biking, skateboarding, and fishing take place along the boardwalk, creating hazards for pedestrians.
- There are significant problems with water infiltration at multiple locations in the Visitor Center (HKT Architects, Inc. 2021). Stairs to the Visitor Center’s bell tower are in “very poor condition,” closed to the public, and in need of repair. This is likely associated with deteriorated mortar joints associated with the tower’s masonry and missing shingles on the tower’s eaves (HKT Architects, Inc. 2021).
- The chimes in the Visitor Center’s bell tower no longer work.
- A recent assessment of the building identified deteriorated and loose clapboards on the clerestory on the south elevation (HKT Architects, Inc. 2021).
- The Park’s Visitor Services Supervisor (VSS) is a long-term seasonal employee who works ten months of the year. The position is unstaffed for three weeks between the summer and winter seasons. During the period when the VSS is not employed, no programming is offered and public access to the Visitor Center is limited the availability of park operations staff.

## *Resource Management Plan: Fall River Heritage State Park*

- Depreciative behaviors, such as suspected illegal activities, in the Park may ultimately decrease visitation.
- The Central Street parking lot is posted as “No Parking, 8 PM–6 AM, Except by Permit.” This occasionally creates conflict with recreationists using facilities outside the Park, but parking within the Park.

### **Opportunities**

- Original plans for the boardwalk included construction of a pavilion during the second phase of construction. This pavilion has not yet been built. Construction of a pavilion may attract more special events, such as weddings, increasing the number of special use permits and associated revenue.
- Making the picnic area accessible will improve recreational opportunities for visitors of all capabilities.
- The entire Park is within an EJ tract. There may be opportunities to further the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs’ (EEA) EJ Policy (EEA 2021) in alignment with the Executive Order on Environmental Justice (No. 552; Patrick 2014).
- The addition of a playground would provide recreation opportunities for families with young children, expanding the appeal of the Park.
- Many Visitor Center-related threats may be addressed through the submission of Work Order requests in CAMIS.
- Addressing building envelope leaks identified in HTK Architects, Inc (2021) would correct the Visitor Center’s water leaks.
- Fall River Heritage is located at the junction of two proposed long-distance multi-use paths: the Taunton River Trail and the South Coast Bikeway. When complete, the Taunton River Trail will extend 22 miles northward, from the Park’s pedestrian bridge over the Quequechan River to Taunton. The multi-use path at Sweets Knoll State Park is part of this trail. The South Coast Bikeway will extend more than 50 miles, from Swansea to Wareham. Along its course, it incorporates a variety of completed and proposed bike paths and bike routes. (See the draft Southeastern Massachusetts Regional Bicycle Plan (Southeastern Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization 2023) for additional information.) These proposed paths create an opportunity to connect Fall River Heritage to Sweets Knoll and to make these parks welcoming destinations and stops for hikers and cyclists. Adding water fountains, bike racks, and bike repair stations would further enhance these parks’ roles as welcoming destinations and stops along the trail.
- Although the “launching or use of any watercraft of any nature or type” in the Park is restricted to authorized personnel (302 CMR 12.07(9)), a nearby public boat ramp at the City of Fall River’s Veterans Memorial Bicentennial Park provides river access for those wishing to boat or fish.

### **CLIMATE CHANGE**

Climate change impacts nearly every aspect of DCR’s properties, from ecosystem health, to infrastructure, to recreation. The Department is actively working to mitigate and adapt to current and future impacts through such actions as forest management, decarbonizing DCR’s buildings and vehicles, 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.

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 2014 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. 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 the vulnerability of its properties and facilities to the anticipated impacts of climate change. A Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment (CCVA) will be 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, buildings, facilities, and other infrastructure. Property-specific climate change information from the CCVA is included in the Climate Change (by 2070) section of the dashboard at the beginning of this RMP.

### **Climate Exposure**

During the preparation of Resource Management Plans some resources may be identified as having particularly high exposure to the anticipated impacts of climate change. When this occurs, these resources are described in the RMP.

The Massachusetts Coastal Flood Risk Model is a probabilistic sea level rise and storm surge model (Woods Hole Group et al. n.d.). The model generates high-resolution inundation predictions based on a combination of sea level rise (through 2070) and storm surge. The entirety of Fall River Heritage State Park, including all infrastructure, is exposed to inundation from coastal flooding.

## **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. All of Fall River Heritage State Park was designated Parkland. Identification of Land Stewardship Zones within Fall River Heritage was performed in the context of the Parkland Landscape Designation.

The following Land Stewardship Zoning is recommended to guide management and any future development. (See Figure 1. Land Stewardship Zoning Map, page 17.)

### **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 Fall River Heritage have been designated Zone 1.

- No portions of Fall River Heritage 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 Fall River Heritage have been designated Zone 2.

- No portions of Fall River Heritage have been designated Zone 2.

### **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 Fall River Heritage are currently developed, appropriate for potential future development, or intensively used for recreation. They have been designated Zone 3.

- All portions of the Park.

### **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.

- There are no Significant Feature Overlays associated with this Park.

### **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-eoeea.hub.arcgis.com/>.

### **CONSISTENCY REVIEW**

Resource Management Plans "shall ensure consistency between recreation, resource protection, and sustainable forest management" (M.G.L. Part 1, Title II, Chapter 21, Section 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 Resource Management Plans “shall ensure consistency between recreation, resource protection, and sustainable forest management” (M.G.L. Part 1, Title II, Chapter 21, Section 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 1, page 18.)

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**

Seventeen priority management recommendations were developed for Fall River Heritage. They are presented in Table 2, page 21. 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:

- 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.

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- 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 2 (page 21) 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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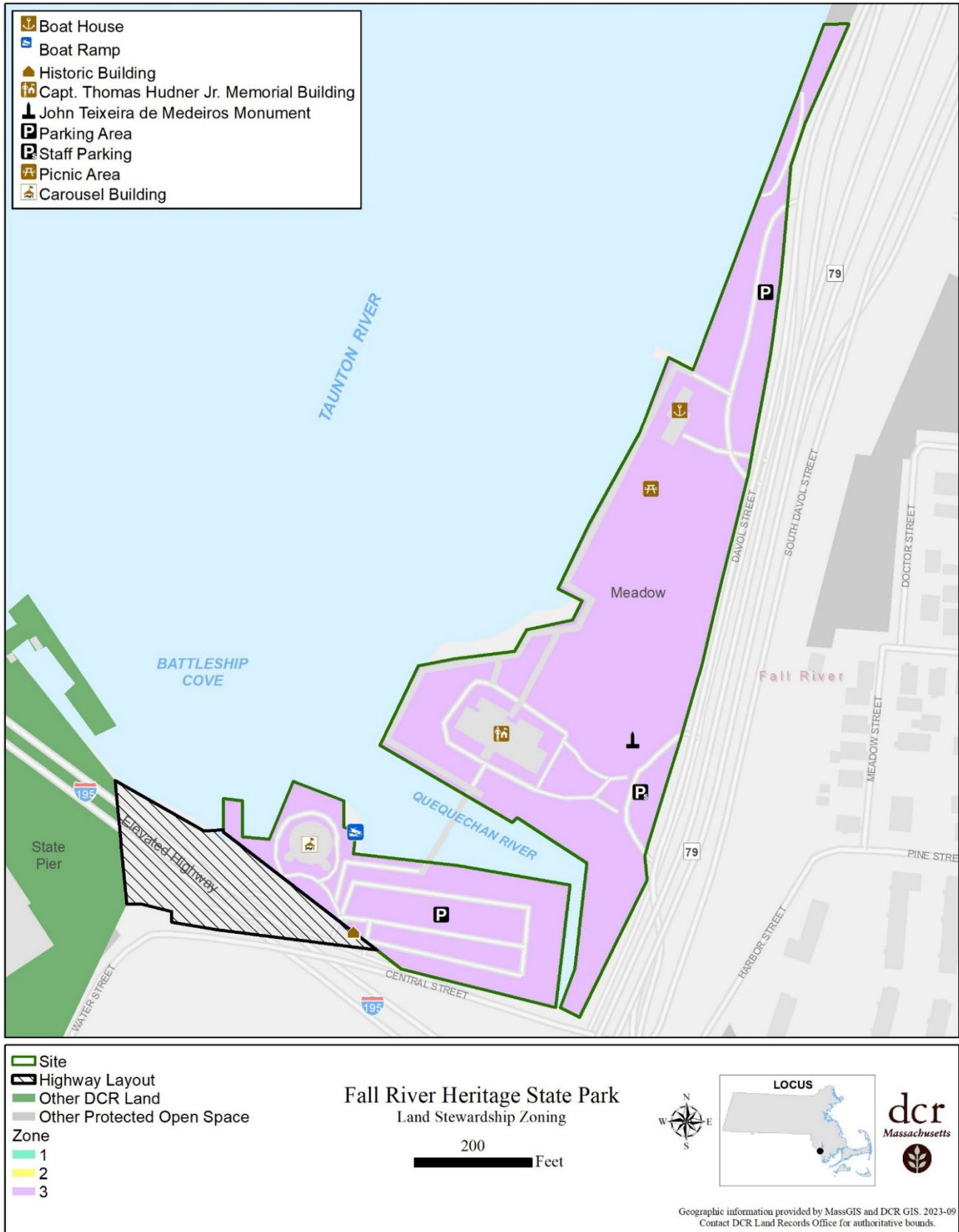


Figure 1. Land Stewardship Zoning Map.

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**Table 1. Consistency Assessment. 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.	N/A
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.	Yes
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.	Yes
Natural Resources	4. Aquatic areas adjacent to beaches, boat ramps and launches, roads, and hiking trails are free of eroded sediments.	Yes
Natural Resources	5. The extent of exposed soil in campground and/or picnic sites is stable or decreasing.	No
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.)	N/A
Natural Resources	10. Zone I wellhead protection areas are free of vehicle parking, chemical storage, or concentrated recreation.	N/A

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<b>Category</b>	<b>Metric</b>	<b>Status</b>
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.)	No
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.	Yes
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.	Yes
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.	No
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.	N/A
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.	N/A
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.	No
Recreation	1. Types of recreation, levels of recreational use, and types and extent of recreation infrastructure are consistent with the park's identity statement.	Yes

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<b>Category</b>	<b>Metric</b>	<b>Status</b>
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.)	Yes
Recreation	3. All authorized trail construction was performed in accordance with an approved Trail Proposal Form.	Yes
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 2023a); DPH fish consumption advisories; and/or water quality testing at waterfront areas.	No
Recreation	9. Recreation facilities are located outside of areas subject to flooding, storm surge, or sea-level rise.	No
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 2. Priority Recommendations for Fall River Heritage State Park. All recommendations are of equal importance. When multiple agency parties are responsible for implementing a recommendation, the lead party, or parties, are identified parenthetically in the Implementation column. Property managers should enter these recommendations as work orders in CAMIS to ensure their tracking and implementation.**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Implementation</b>
Natural Resources	Repair bare spots in the Meadow’s vegetation; consider revegetating the Meadow with native plants beneficial to pollinators.	Park Operations
Natural Resources	Consult with DCR’s urban forester and the Greening the Gateway Cities program to review current management of ornamental trees and to identify replacement species best suited for planting at this facility.	Park Operations (Lead), Urban and Community Forestry
Natural Resources	Install signs at boat ramp on preventing the spread of aquatic invasive organisms.	Interpretive Services (Lead), Lakes and Ponds Program
Natural Resources	As funding allows, and within the context of the Massachusetts Coastal Flood Risk Model, prioritize and implement the building envelope repair and decarbonization recommendations identified in HTK Architects, Inc. (2021).	Design and Project Management (Lead), Office of Climate Resiliency
Cultural Resources	Research the building at entrance to Central Street parking lot.	Office of Cultural Resources
Cultural Resources	Submit work order to repair or replace the roof on the historic building at the entrance to the Central Street parking lot.	Park Operations (Lead), Office of Cultural Resources
Recreation	Replace the wooden pilings near the boat house.	Waterways Program (Lead), Contractor
Recreation	Update audiovisual equipment in the Visitor Center’s theater.	Consultant, Interpretive Services (Lead)
Recreation	Assess the suitability of installing a playground. If warranted, add park to list of new playground locations.	Office of Design and Planning
Recreation	Conduct an engineering assessment of the seawall along the Central Street parking lot; repair as warranted.	Waterways Program

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<b>Category</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Implementation</b>
Recreation	Review proposed pavilion as identified in Phase 2 of boardwalk construction; program construction funds if warranted.	Office of Design and Planning (Co-Lead), Facilities Engineering (Co-Lead)
Recreation	Increase accessibility of picnic area and its connection to the boardwalk.	Contractor, Engineering, Universal Access Program (Lead)
Recreation	As appropriate, promote EEA's Environmental Justice Policy goals at Fall River Heritage State Park.	Interpretive Services, Park Operations, Regional Staff (Lead)
Recreation	Submit work orders for repairs to Visitor Center; regularly monitor work order status, work with Regional Director and Regional Engineer to prioritize safety-related needs.	Engineering, Park Operations (Lead), Regional Staff, Visitor Services
Recreation	Correct deficiencies in building envelope, as detailed in HKT Architects, Inc. (2021).	Contractor, Facilities Engineering (Lead)
Recreation	Develop interpretive panel related to the Taunton's status as a Wild and Scenic River.	Interpretive Services
Recreation	Develop and design exterior interpretive panels on the Park grounds and boardwalk that reflect the natural and cultural stories of the site.	Consultant, Interpretive Services (Lead), Partner

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