

**Myles Standish State Forest Resource Management Plan
Report to DCR Stewardship Council
Update on Status of Priority RMP Recommendations**

Priority Actions (listed in RMP Executive Summary)	Status Update
Goal 1. Maintain and enhance habitats for rare species, native plants and wildlife.	
<p>1. Develop and implement a comprehensive fire management program to include a combination of mechanical fuel reduction and prescribed fire to improve and maintain habitat quality for rare Pine Barrens species, as well as to reduce the potential for an uncontrollable wildfire.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Controlled burns were conducted on 397 acres in 2011 and 2012. - Mechanical fuel reduction was completed on 264 acres along Mast Road and the northeast corner of the forest in 2011 and 2012. - Additional controlled burns are proposed to occur after the Red Pine plantations have been removed to support development of Pine Barrens (See Action Item 3 below). - Seeking U.S. Forest Service funding to prepare a comprehensive fire management plan for the Forest.
<p>2. Continue to exclude motorized off-highway vehicles (OHV) from MSSF, and limit motorized vehicle traffic on unpaved forest service roads and utility corridors to minimal traffic for the purposes of maintenance, safety, habitat management and monitoring. Monitor and enforce OHV restriction using the Park Watch Program with law enforcement support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DCR Rangers and EPOs have conducted joint patrols and educate OHV users on DCR regulations. EPOs also report performing proactive/targeted patrols independently. EPOs also issue citations for OHV violations with additional limited enforcement also performed by state and local police. - NStar has begun installing vehicle barriers and 18 gates to discourage OHV access on roads or trails that lead to or affect the 5.2-mile electric transmission line corridor. NStar is consulting with park staff on appropriate siting of barriers and gates. - NStar has provided \$25,000 to DCR to purchase “No OHV” signs and information kiosks to deter OHV use in the forest. Installation of signage will occur following NStar’s installation of vehicle barriers and gates.
<p>3. Develop and implement a plan to remove tree plantations consisting of non-native species in consultation with the Forest Reserves Science Advisory Committee to reduce fire danger and improve Pine Barrens habitat. Following cutting, controlled burning should be implemented to stimulate development of native Pine Barren habitat.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The FRSAC supports a plan to remove 576 acres of dead or declining red pine plantations this winter. - Prescribed burns will be used to maintain approximately 470 acres as Pine Barrens habitat.

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4. Conduct both natural and cultural resource surveys to identify sensitive resources in areas scheduled for fuel reduction, controlled burns or plantation removal operations.	DCR Archaeologist and Ecologist have surveyed areas scheduled for fuel reduction, controlled burn, and proposed red pine plantation removal operations.
5. Maintain a variety of grasslands and early successional forests to provide habitat for uncommon grassland and shrubland bird species such as whip-poor-wills, prairie warblers, American kestrels and bluebirds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Each fall, DCR has mowed the firebreaks and road shoulders, and DFW has mowed the Wildlife Management Areas to maintain early successional bird habitat. - Red Pine removal followed by controlled burns will provide an additional 470 acres of early successional habitat. - NStar will maintain 95 acres of trees cleared for the new transmission line as early successional habitat.
6. Work with Mass Wildlife to prepare a new management plan and MOA for the Pheasant and Quail Management Areas to control non-native species, promote native plants and reduce trail impacts in consultation with NHESP.	- Mass Wildlife and DCR have prepared a draft MOA and are preparing a management plan for the Wildlife Management Areas in consultation with the NHESP.
Goal 2. Protect and enhance the quality of water resources within the Forest.	
7. Post invasive species warning signs at the East Head Reservoir, Rocky, Curlew and Charge Pond fisherman landings warning boat owners of the need to avoid transporting invasive species from pond to pond on their boats.	- Invasive plant species signs have been posted at the East Head Reservoir, Rocky, Curlew and Charge Pond boat landings.
8. Restore compacted and eroded areas at Charge, Fearing, Barrett, College and Curlew Ponds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fearing Pond-H site has been completed - The Lakes and Pond program has budgeted \$105,000 to complete site restoration work at Charge and Curlew Ponds by May 1, 2014.
Goal 3. Preserve the distinct scenic and cultural qualities of the Forest.	
9. Until an archaeological survey has been completed, new alterations of undisturbed, level and well-drained areas around ponds and wetlands should be avoided, and monitored where activities are already occurring.	- No work involving ground disturbance has been conducted unless specifically reviewed and approved by the DCR archaeologist.
10. Back fill the “Homestead” dump site to eliminate the OHV track and restore original topography.	- The “Homestead” dump site has been filled.

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11. Find a park use for the Perry House that minimizes alterations to the building (e.g. Environmental Police Headquarters, Camp Store or Nature Center). If a park use is not found, consider the property for inclusion in the Historic Curatorship Program.	- Definitive plans for the Perry House have not been developed yet. Some concepts have been explored involving interpretive uses or space for a camp store. However, these concepts are not definitive and require further review and consideration.
12. Stabilize the CCC Fearing Pond Bathhouse to avoid further deterioration.	- DCR recently contracted with Stephen Kelliher Architects to conduct an assessment of the building. DCR is in the process of reviewing the assessment and options for stabilization, however additional capital or deferred maintenance funding would be needed to complete this project.
<p style="text-align: center;">Goal 4. Provide diverse opportunities for sustainable outdoor recreation.</p>	
13. Re-open picnic area and beach at Fearing Pond to reduce over use of College Pond day use area during peak summer weekends.	- Warner Brothers restored the day use parking area during film production in the Forest. - Additional summer season staff is needed to reopen the picnic area. The South Region will include a request for necessary seasonal staff in the proposed roster for the Summer of 2014.
14. Expand College Pond day use area swimming beach.	- Additional lifeguard staff is necessary to expand the swimming area. The South Region will include additional seasonal lifeguards in its proposed roster for the Summer of 2014.
15. Increase frequency of comfort station cleaning during peak summer weekends.	- Additional summer staff as well as an additional vehicle and equipment are necessary to increase the frequency of comfort station cleaning.
16. Replace the central Curlew Pond comfort station to provide accessible facilities with showers and dish washing sinks.	- The new comfort station was completed and available for use during the entire 2013 camping season.
17. Complete minor comfort station exterior repairs, interior renovations and install dish washing sinks at the Charge, Fearing and Barrett Pond camping areas.	-This work is ongoing with park staff performing painting and shingling as needed. - Repairs and interior renovations have been completed on two comfort stations at Barrett Pond camping area. -Dish washing sinks have been installed at all campground comfort stations in the Forest.

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<p>18. Prepare site plans for each cottage pond that protects sensitive wetland communities, corrects shore erosion, provides appropriate access for public recreation and preserves the cottage communities. The site plans should identify cottages that must be removed or relocated to protect sensitive wetland communities or provide appropriate public recreational access.</p>	<p>- Additional resources would be required to conduct this assessment.</p>
<p>19. For the remaining privately owned cottages, continue the current management policy of eventually eliminating the private cottage program through gradual retirement of existing permits.</p>	<p>- DCR has continued the current cottage permit policy toward eventually ending the program. In 2011, there were 174 active cottage permits at MSSF. Between 2012 and 2013, 4 cottages were relinquished by the owner and DCR revoked an additional 10 permits for nonpayment/noncompliance.</p>
<p>20. Work with Partners to schedule regular removal of pine needles and prune vegetation along the paved bike path.</p>	<p>- Bike trail was maintained by DCR staff using a Kubota with brush and mower attachments purchased with NSTAR mitigation funds.</p>
<p>21. Repair cracks and heaves along the paved bike trail. As needed, add trail signs at road crossings, winding and hilly areas.</p>	<p>- Plans and specifications have been prepared for the repairs. Investigating use of DCR staff and Department of Corrections labor to complete the work.</p>
<p>22. Resolve right of way legal issues and repair the road over the East Head Reservoir dam to provide direct access from the West Entrance and Headquarters complex to the College, Charge and Fearing Pond use areas, MCI Plymouth, Camp Squanto and Camp Chacalot, reducing heavy truck damage to Lower College and Halfway Pond Roads.</p>	<p>- Initial assessment conducted by Lands Committee and Dam Engineers. Private ownership of the Dam by two cranberry growers is a legal challenge. Dam and road repair work estimated to cost approximately \$1 million.</p>
<p>Goal 5. Expand interpretive and environmental education programs.</p>	
<p>23. Provide new interpretive kiosks at the Charge Pond Road Parking Lot #5 and Fire Tower Parking Lot #6. The kiosks should include a map of the Forest, Forest rules, description of facilities available in the Forest and a brochure holder for trail maps. Provide a Fire Danger Sign at the East Entrance.</p>	<p>- A Fire Danger Sign has been installed at the East Entrance.</p> <p>- DCR is exploring a partnership to have new kiosks be built by Department of Corrections labor using materials and design specifications supplied by DCR.</p>

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<p>24. Install interpretive panels and trail map holders on the existing kiosks at the East Entrance Parking Lot #4 and the Upper College Pond Road Parking Lot #2, including a map of the Forest, Forest rules and a description of facilities available in the Forest.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pine Barrens interpretive panels have been installed at the East Entrance, Parking Lot #2, and Headquarters parking area. The signs were designed and fabricated in partnership with the Nature Conservancy. - The Regional Interpreter Coordinator is developing trail maps and park information to post on the existing kiosks.
<p>Goal 6. Involve partners in the achievement of the Management Goals.</p>	
<p>25. Provide assistance to the Friends of MSSF in identifying and controlling invasive plant species within sensitive natural communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DCR prepared and obtained permits for the Friends Spotted Knapweed biological control project. - The Friends have released Knapweed flower and root weevils at two large infestation sites, and are mechanically removing smaller infestations in the Forest. - DCR's red pine plantation removal also includes plans to remove invasive plant species before and after operations.
<p>26. Work with the Friends of MSSF to establish a Native Plant Garden and Pine Barrens interpretive programs to educate park visitors and area landowners in techniques for enhancing native plants and birds, and pest control to prevent chemical poisoning of native wildlife.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Friends have created a native plant garden in front of the Forest Headquarters. - The Friends and DCR have jointly developed and led Pine Barrens interpretive tours.