

# **Walden Pond Open Water Swimming**



# Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Governor

**Deval L. Patrick**

Energy and Environmental Secretary

**Maeve Vallely Bartlett**

Department of Conservation and Recreation Commissioner

**John P. Murray**

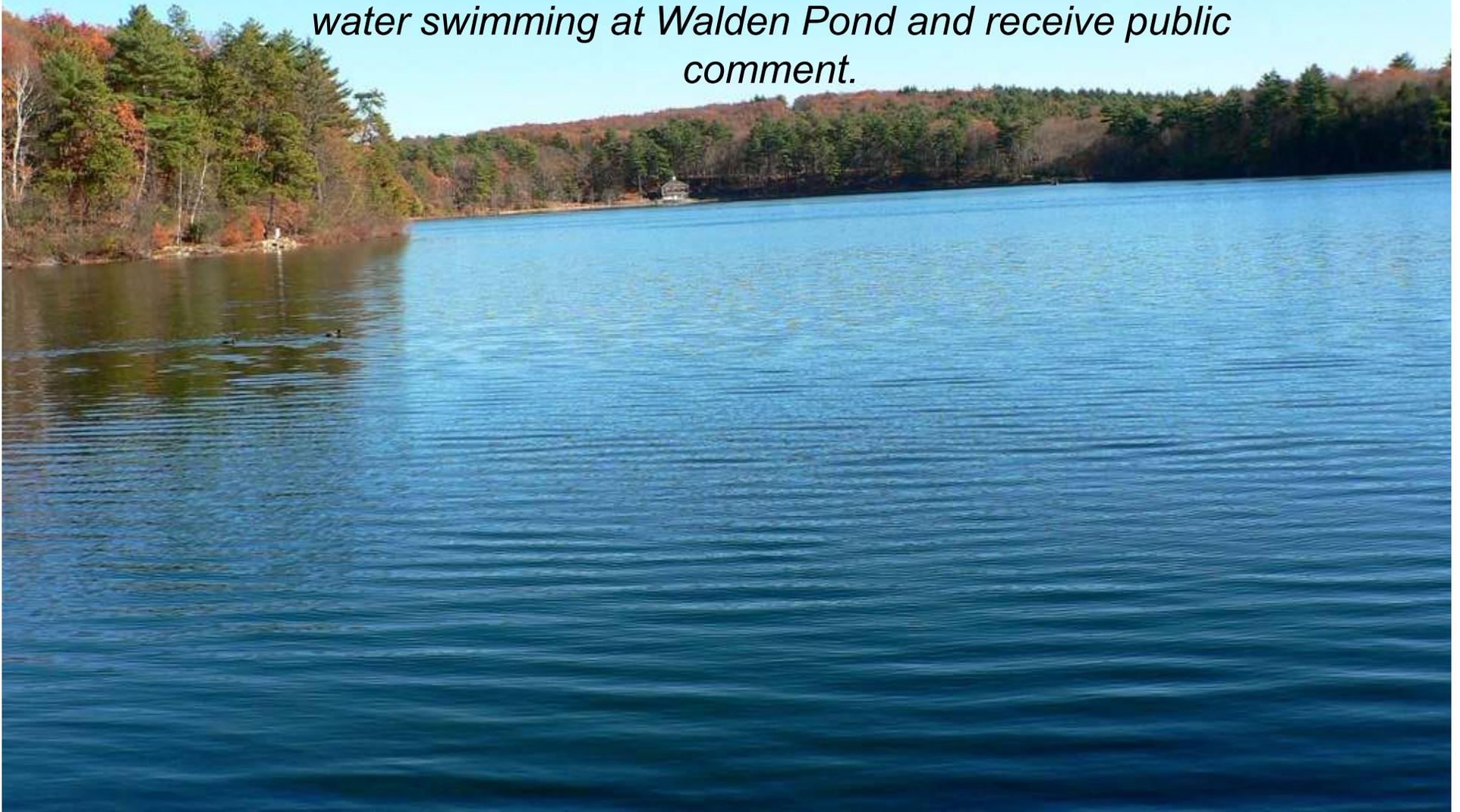
# Mission Statement

*To protect, promote and enhance our common wealth of natural, cultural and recreational resources for the well-being of all.*



# Purpose of Meeting

*To review DCR's proposed plan for managing open water swimming at Walden Pond and receive public comment.*





# Agenda

- Background
- Process
- Highlights of Working Group Meetings
- Draft OWS Plan Review
- Self Assessment
- Next Steps
- Comments

# Background

- The current rules prohibit open water swimming, but it has been a popular recreational activity over the years.
- Unmanaged OWS is creating confusion for the public, DCR staff and public safety personnel
- DCR seeks to formally recognize OWS as a legitimate recreational activity, institute procedures for improved management and balance different recreational uses on the pond.



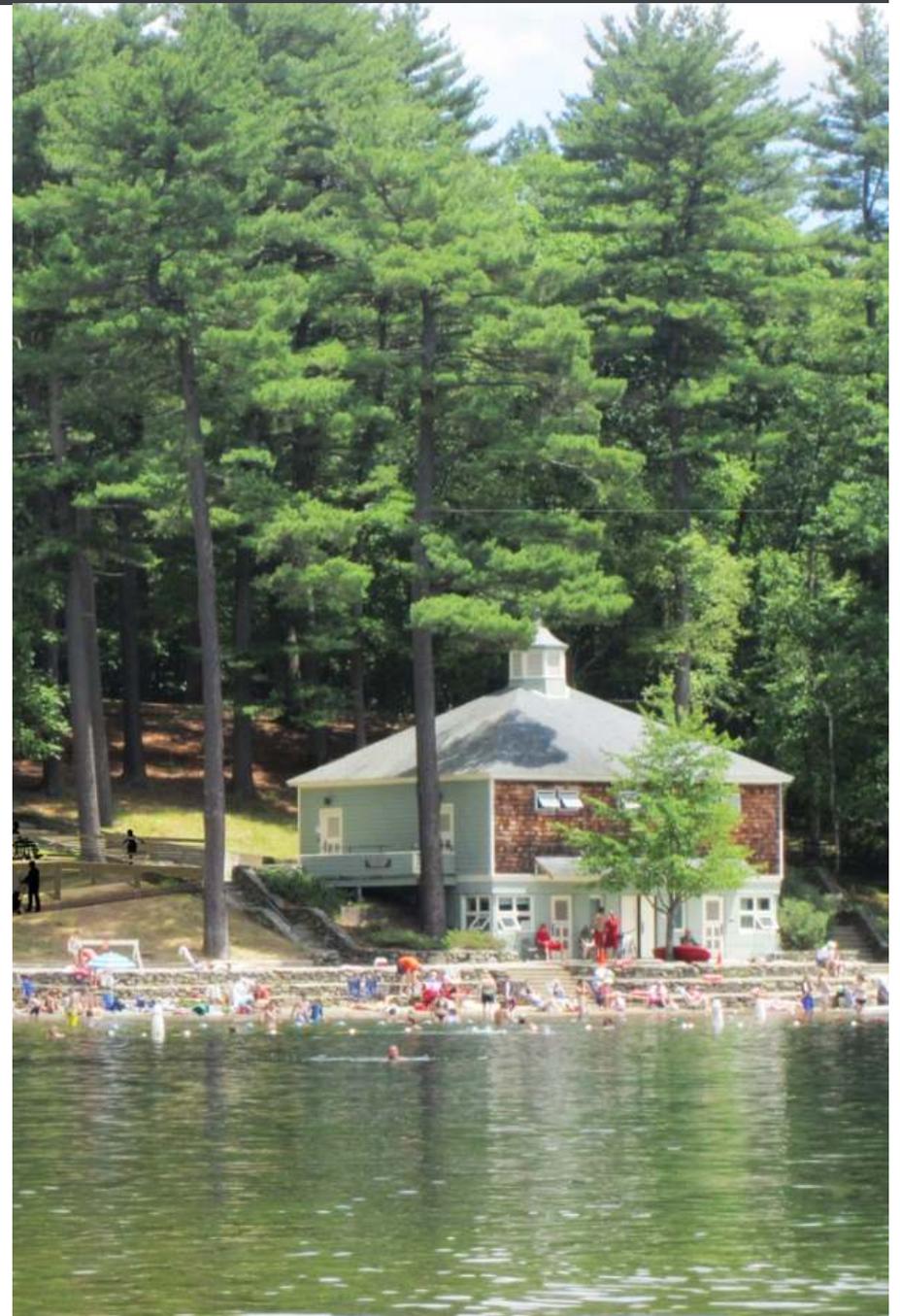


# Process

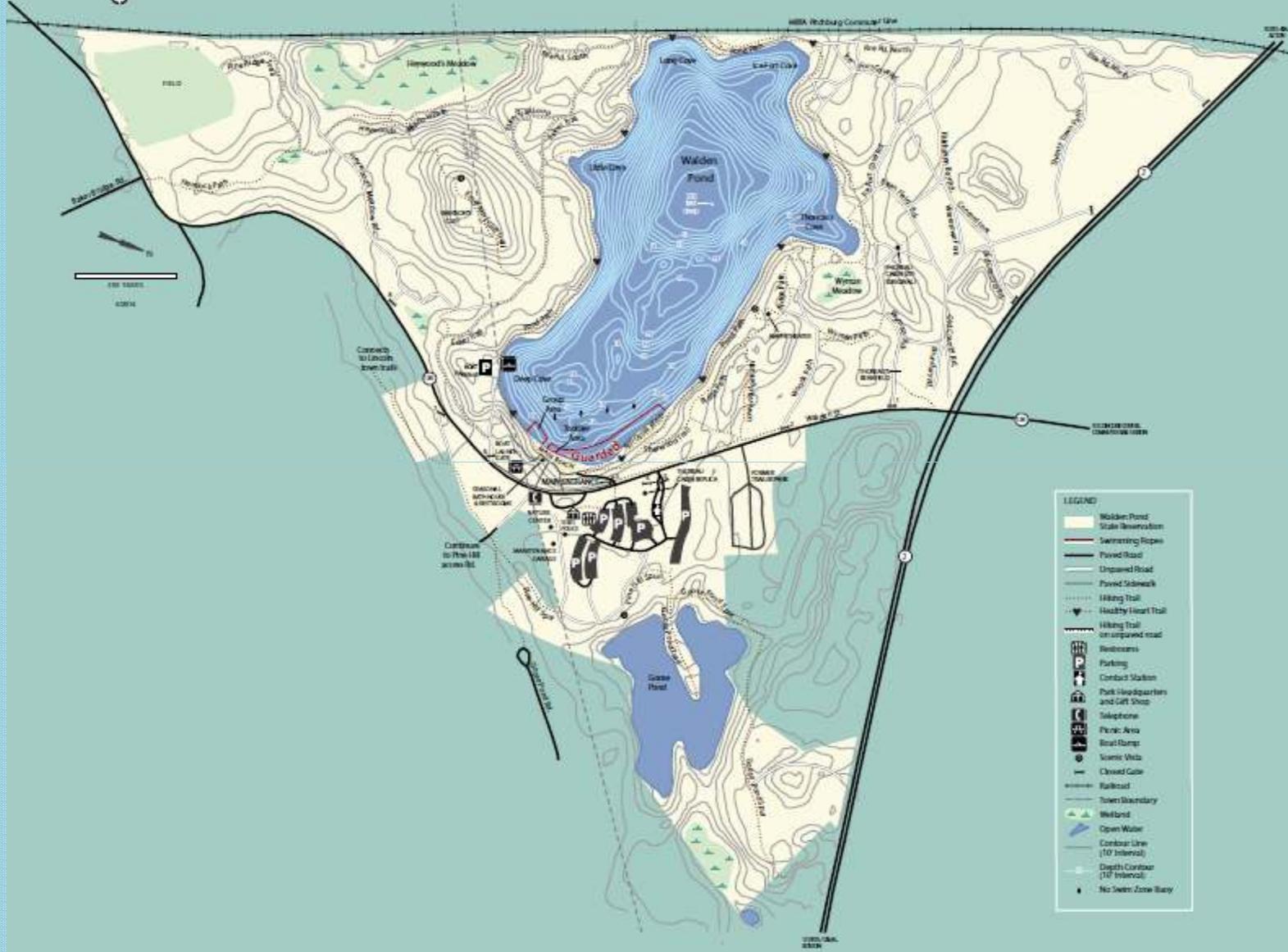
- Instituted New Pilot Waterfront Operations Plan Summer 2014
- OWS Stakeholders Meetings
  - May 14, 2014
  - May 21, 2014
- Working Group Meetings
  - July 17, 2014
  - July 31, 2014
  - Aug. 13, 2014
  - Sept. 10, 2014
- Review with Public Safety Officials
  - May 15, 2014
  - May 16, 2014
  - Oct. 08, 2014
- Review with Walden Advisory Board
  - June 24, 2014
  - May 13, 2014
  - Oct. 09, 2014
- Public Meeting Oct. 28, 2014
- Comment Period Nov. 23, 2014
- Finalize Plan/Implement December 2014

# OWS Working Group Meeting Highlights

- Confirmed Topics of Focus
  - Swimmer, Area, Safety
- Reviewed the New Pilot Waterfront Operations Plan and Data Collection



dcr  
Massachusetts  
Walden Pond State Reservation



- LEGEND**
- Walden Pond State Reservation
  - Swimming Ripon
  - Paved Road
  - Unpaved Road
  - Paved Sidewalk
  - Hiking Trail
  - Hobbly Heart Trail
  - Hiking Trail on unpaved road
  - Restrooms
  - Parking
  - Contact Station
  - Park Headquarters and Gift Shop
  - Telephone
  - Picnic Area
  - Boat Ramp
  - Scenic Vista
  - Chained Gate
  - Railroad
  - Town Boundary
  - Wetland
  - Open Water
  - Contour Line (10' Interval)
  - Depth Contour (10' Interval)
  - No Swim Zone Bary

## **OWS Working Group Meeting Highlights (cont'd)**

- Communication and Education
- Discussed Conflicts Among Swimmers, Boaters and People Fishing
- Discussed Safety
- Working Group Review and Approve Draft OWS Plan



# Review of Plan

- DCR Internal Review
- Public Safety Review
- Walden Advisory Board Review





# Draft OWS Overview

The plan recognizes that open water swimming is a personal choice that individuals must make for themselves based upon their own abilities.

The draft plan has the following elements:

- Rules and Best Practices
- Self Assessment

## Draft OWS Plan Highlights

- Rules
  - Follow directives of DCR personnel
  - Entry and Exit Point beyond guarded area
  - Stay 100 feet away from boat launch
  - Respect pond users and no active interference
  - Restriction on competitive open water swimming events
  - Prohibition on group or shot gun starts





## Draft OWS Plan Highlights

- **Best Practices**
  - Conduct self assessment on regular basis
  - Swim with a partner
  - Utilize self rescue equipment
  - Wear white/brightly colored swim cap to make you more visible
  - Inform others of swim route and expected return
  - Know your limits

## Draft OWS Plan Highlights (cont'd)

- Best Practices
  - Know your limits
  - Wear a wet suit when water temps are below 70 degrees
  - Note location of other users. Swim at least 50 feet from boat or fishermen
  - Be alert and look up often
  - Do not swim in poor weather
  - Do not use prohibited flotation equipment
  - Do not swim if ill or have medical condition that makes swimming unsafe





## Self Assessment

- Developed by experienced open water swimmers
- Consists of a series of questions for swimmers to ask themselves before engaging in open water swimming
- Intended to be used on a regular basis as personal abilities, physical conditions and site conditions may change
- All questions may not apply but should be used as a guideline

## Next Steps

- Public Comment
- Finalize Plan
- Communication and Education
- Data Collection of recreational users, summer 2014
- DCR to expand water testing protocols to monitor water quality at multiple points, summer 2015
- Lakes and ponds shoreline assessment
- Continue monitoring conflicts among recreational users, engage OWS community for plan implementation and management and revise plan as needed.





## Additional Information

For more information:

– Web:

<http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dcr/public-outreach/public-meetings/>

If you have comments; by close of business on  
**November 21, 2014:**

Email: [dcr.updates@state.ma.us](mailto:dcr.updates@state.ma.us), noting  
“Walden open water swimming” in  
the subject line

Call: **617-626-4974**

Write: Department of Conservation and  
Recreation, Office of Public Outreach,  
251 Causeway Street, Suite 600, Boston,  
MA 02114

Note: Public comments submitted to DCR by  
email or letter may be posted on the DCR  
website in their entirety, and no content,  
including personal information, will be  
redacted.

If you have questions or concerns or would like to be  
added to an email list to receive DCR general  
announcements:

Email: [MassParks@state.ma.us](mailto:MassParks@state.ma.us)

Call: **617-626-4973**



Thank You! Thank You! Thank You!

## **Working Group**

Gary Briere, Facilitator  
Linda Allen, Co Chair (WAB)  
Priscilla Geigis, Co-Chair (DCR)  
David Bentley  
Cathy Brennan  
Mike Frederick  
Paul Goudreau  
Joan Kisthardt  
Frank Kjaersgaard  
Karne Mackin  
Carolyn Mcqueen  
Chris O'Leary  
Big Al Prescott  
Tamara Rose  
Martha Siegel  
Ira Sills  
John Small  
Laura Tanguoso  
Jennifer Campen  
Beth Zeeman

## **Contributors**

(Boating, Fishing,Swimming)  
Mark Bleiweiss  
Sue Bleiweiss  
Helen Brown  
Ken Brown  
Joe Chiasson  
Dan Christianson  
Alyson Fletcher  
Melissa Glaister  
Judy Hall  
Mike Hollywood  
Donald Keller  
Kathleen Kelly  
Alex Meyer  
Mitch Nelin  
Jan Outcult  
Nick Pierson  
Dave Reid  
Natasha Shabat  
David Smyly  
Bruno Viscocchi  
*And others.....*

## **Public Safety**

Col. Chris Baker, ELE  
Lt. Mike Cook, SP  
Paul Flynn, Concord PD  
Capt. Bob Forsythe, ELE  
Chief Kevin Kennedy, Lincoln  
Sean Kennedy, Lincoln  
Jonathan McClure, SP  
Major Arthur Sugrue, SP  
David Wright, ELE  
Sgt Paul Flynn, Concord PD  
Lt Roy Mulcahy, Concord PD

## **Walden Advisory Board(WAB)**

Ken Bassett, Chair  
Stuart Weinreb  
John Coleman  
Francine Benes  
Linda Allen

## **DCR Staff**

John Dwinell  
Kathryn Garcia  
Priscilla Geigis  
Susan Hamilton  
Peter Hoffmann  
Samantha Overton

# Comments

