

E. Public Access Policies - 2006

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Driving for Sightseeing

Policy

Driving access for sightseeing is limited to licensed drivers in registered vehicles on designated roads in unrestricted areas within Quabbin Park and to the three designated Boat Launch areas between the times of one hour before sunrise and one hour after sunset and days of operation.

Summary

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Quabbin Park</i>	<i>Quabbin Reservation</i>	<i>Off-Reservation</i>	<i>Quabbin Reservoir</i>	<i>Regulating Ponds</i>	<i>Off-Watershed Ponds¹</i>
Driving for Sightseeing	□ ²	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘

□ General Restrictions: General public access within the Quabbin Reservoir Watershed System is restricted to one hour before sunrise and one hour after sunset through gates or designated (posted) areas only. Any activity which injures or defaces the property of the Commonwealth is strictly prohibited.

Discussion

The Quabbin Reservoir Watershed System has a large number of scenic views from its surrounding roads. Recent survey input suggests that this activity is currently one of the most popular recreational uses of the system. However, driving is limited to designated paved roads and designated parking areas.

Vehicles parked at overlooks or parking areas may leave toxic chemicals (e.g., motor oil, and engine coolant) on the surface. These chemicals are concentrated in these areas and may be transported to the system’s tributaries and ultimately the reservoir through stream or overland flow. In addition, the introduction of exhaust compounds, erosion, improper disposal of human fecal waste, disturbance of wilderness character, and behavior such as littering are associated with this activity.

This policy has been modified because vehicle access is now excluded on Winsor Dam and Goodnough Dike because of newly established security measures.

¹ South Spectacle Pond, Bassett Pond, and Peppers Mill Pond are off-watershed ponds.

² The Winsor Dam and Goodnough Dike have restricted vehicle access for security reasons. See Quabbin Park map for paved roads.

Snowmobiling

Policy

Snowmobiling access is prohibited throughout most of the Quabbin Reservoir Watershed System: Quabbin Reservoir, Quabbin Park, Quabbin Reservation, and all restricted areas. Limited snowmobiling access on designated, marked trails (**Map 1**) is allowed only within Off-Reservation lands and only according to the general access policy and all other applicable state regulations (e.g., MA Snow Vehicle Operation regulations - 304 CMR 12.29).

Snowmobile use in designated areas is allowed through 350 CMR 11.09 2(a)(12): No Person shall drive a motorized vehicle within the Watershed System except upon roads authorized for such use by DCR or its designee. Recreational vehicles are prohibited on all Watershed System property except the use of snowmobiles in areas designated by DCR or its designee...”

Summary

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Quabbin Park</i>	<i>Quabbin Reservation</i>	<i>Off-Reservation</i>	<i>Quabbin Reservoir</i>	<i>Regulating Ponds</i>	<i>Off-Watershed Ponds¹</i>
Snowmobiling	⊘	⊘	□ ²	⊘	⊘	⊘

□ General Restrictions: General public access within the Quabbin Reservoir Watershed System is restricted to one hour before sunrise and one hour after sunset through gates or designated (posted) areas only. Any activity which injures or defaces the property of the Commonwealth is strictly prohibited.

Discussion

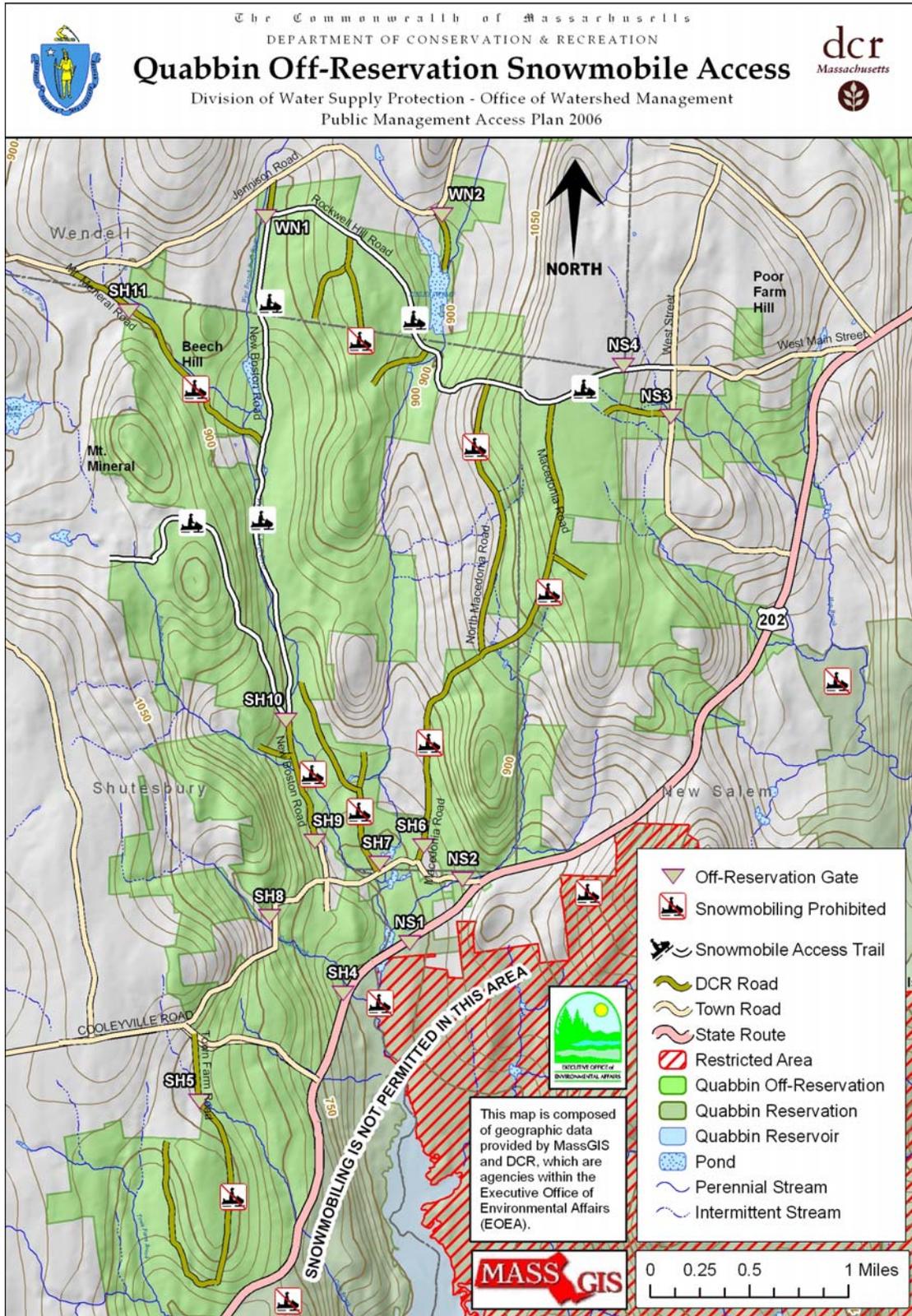
Snowmobile use is prohibited throughout most of the Watershed System because of both its potential impact to the wilderness character, disturbance of vegetation, and its potential to introduce exhaust compounds and other hazardous materials. In addition, the introduction of chemicals on trails, improper disposal of fecal waste, and behavior such as littering may introduce sediments, chemicals, and pathogens to the system. Over 57 Ranger interventions have occurred over this policy. This policy has been changed to designate specific trails to protect water quality and public safety and to minimize user conflicts in the Off-Reservation areas. The specific trail was developed in collaboration with local snowmobile club input. When snow cover is sufficient, there should be little mechanical impacts on ground vegetation and soil.

This policy has been modified to designate a specific off-reservation trail.

¹ South Spectacle Pond, Bassett Pond, and Peppers Mill Pond are off-watershed ponds.

² Snowmobiling is allowed only on the DCR designated trail located on off-reservation land. 304 CMR 12.29 applies.

Map 1 DCR Designated Snowmobile Access – Off-Reservation



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All-terrain Vehicle Riding (ATV)

Policy

All-terrain vehicle riding (including dirt biking) is prohibited throughout the entire Quabbin Reservoir Watershed System.

Watershed Protection Regulations 350 CMR 11.09 2(a)(12) state: “No Person shall drive a motorized vehicle within the Watershed System except upon roads authorized for such use by DCR or its designee. Recreational vehicles are prohibited on all Watershed System property...”

Summary

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Quabbin Park</i>	<i>Quabbin Reservation</i>	<i>Off-Reservation</i>	<i>Quabbin Reservoir</i>	<i>Regulating Ponds</i>	<i>Off-Watershed Ponds¹</i>
ATV Riding	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘

□ General Restrictions: General public access within the Quabbin Reservoir Watershed System is restricted to one hour before sunrise and one hour after sunset through gates or designated (posted) areas only. Any activity which injures or defaces the property of the Commonwealth is strictly prohibited.

Discussion

All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) use on non-paved surfaces can cause substantial vegetation and soil damage (commonly seen on the local power line rights of-way). In addition, this activity causes both air and noise pollution. Overall, this activity causes erosion and chemicals left on the land which can introduce sediment, chemicals, and pathogens to the water supply system. This policy is based not only on regulation but also on significant documentation of the erosion impacts associated with off-road vehicle and all-terrain vehicle use.

This 1998 policy has not changed.

¹ South Spectacle Pond, Bassett Pond, and Peppers Mill Pond are off-watershed ponds.

Bicycling – Designated Roads

Policy

Mountain bicycling and road bicycling are only allowed on DCR designated roads (**Maps 2-5**) and on woods road with seasonal restrictions on Off-Reservation lands. Helmets and protective gear are required by MA law for children under 16 years of age, and are recommended for all others. In Quabbin Park, bicycling is allowed only on designated paved roads in nonrestricted areas. In Quabbin Reservation, bicycling is allowed only on designated roads through DCR gates 29, 30, 31, 35, 40, 43A & 43B, and 44. Bicycling is specifically prohibited off-road and along the reservoir shoreline. Bicycling is only allowed on designated roads through DCR Gate 8 during the Quabbin fishing season on Quabbin Reservation lands. Watershed Protection Regulations 350 CMR 11.09 2(a)(14) state: “The use of bicycles, skis and other means of non-motorized transportation within the Watershed System shall be permitted only in areas designated by DCR or its designee.”

Summary

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Quabbin Park</i>	<i>Quabbin Reservation</i>	<i>Off-Reservation</i>	<i>Quabbin Reservoir</i>	<i>Regulating Ponds</i>	<i>Off-Watershed Ponds¹</i>
Bicycling – Designated Roads	☐ ²	☐ ³	☐ ⁴			

☐ General Restrictions: General public access within the Quabbin Reservoir Watershed System is restricted to one hour before sunrise and one hour after sunset through gates or designated (posted) areas only. Any activity which injures or defaces the property of the Commonwealth is strictly prohibited.

Discussion

Limited bicycling on paved or graveled road surfaces (as required by this policy) should have little water quality impact. However, associated activities do have potential water quality impact: physical and microbial water quality threats from erosion, improperly managed human fecal waste sanitation, and behavior such as illegal body/water contact, littering or vandalism. Watershed Ranger records show that the increasing demand and popularity of off-road bicycling and the desire to bike along the reservoir’s shoreline is becoming an emerging rule violation on DCR-OWM lands. These impacts may introduce sediments, chemicals, and pathogens to the water supply system. This policy is limited to bicycling on designated (paved/gravel roads).

¹ South Spectacle Pond, Bassett Pond, and Peppers Mill Pond are off-watershed ponds.

² Bicycling is only allowed on designated roads. See DCR map. Helmets and protective gear are required by MA law for children under 16 years of age and recommended for others. In Quabbin Park, bicycling is allowed only on designated paved roads in nonrestricted areas.

³ Bicycling is allowed only on designated roads through DCR gates 29, 30, 31, 35, 40, 43A & B, and 44 on Reservation lands.

Bicycling is only allowed on designated roads through Gate 8 during fishing season. See DCR’s Bicycling map for designated roads.

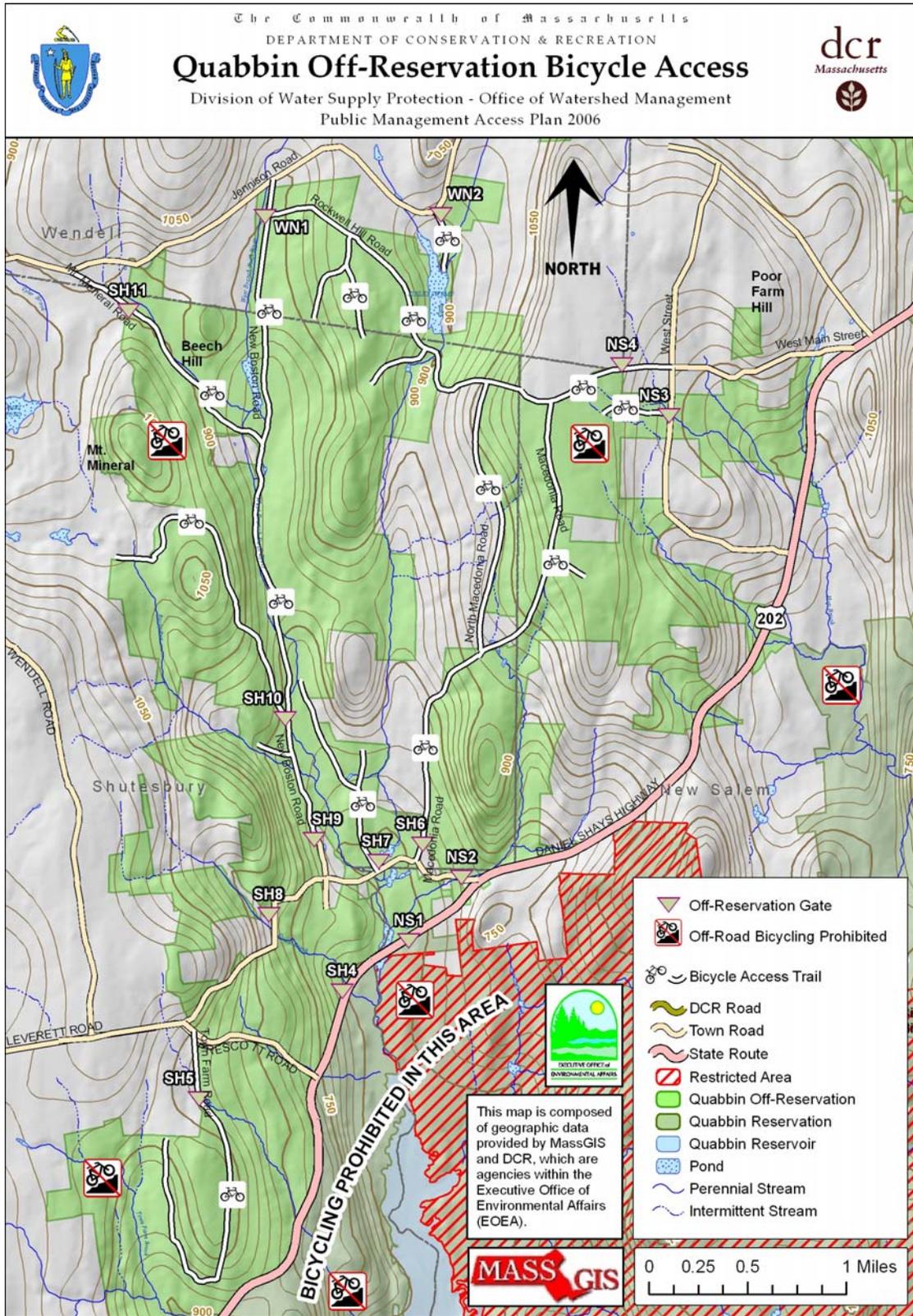
⁴ Bicycling is allowed on main forest roads only within all Off-Reservation lands with seasonal restrictions.

This policy has been changed. The designated paved/gravel routes have been moderately increased to provide better human sanitation management and monitoring options.

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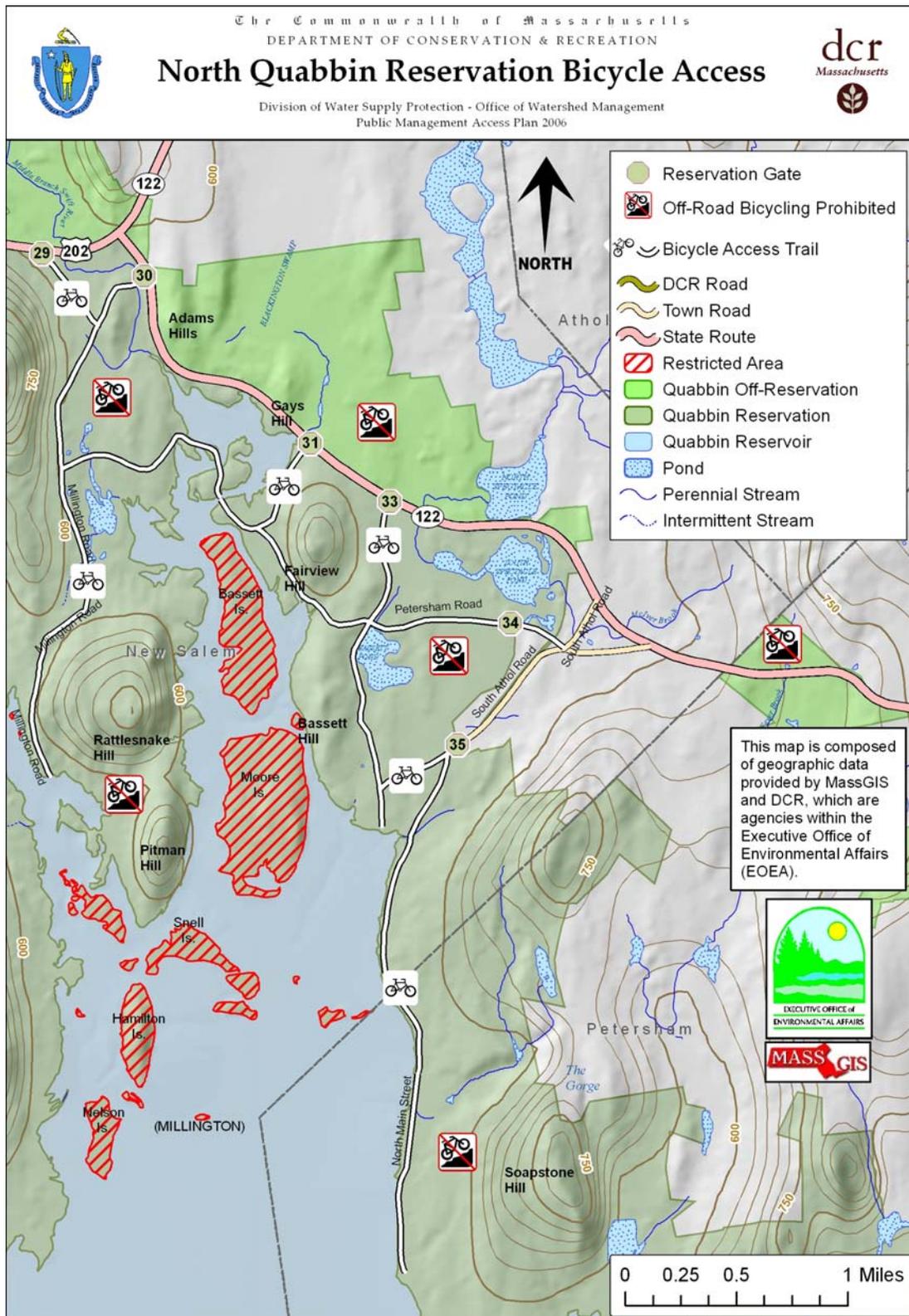
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Map 3 DCR Designated Bicycle Routes – Off-Reservation



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Map 4 DCR Designated Bicycle Routes – North



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Off-road Bicycling

Policy

Off-road bicycling is prohibited throughout the Quabbin Reservoir Watershed System.

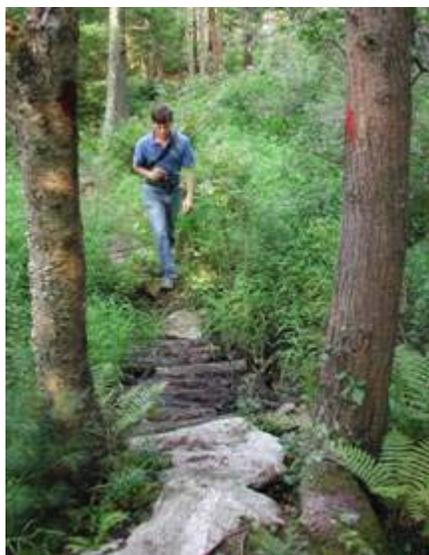
Watershed Protection Regulations 350 CMR 11.09 2(a)(14) state: “The use of bicycles, skis and other means of non-motorized transportation within the Watershed System shall be permitted only in areas designated by DCR or its designee.”

Summary

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Quabbin Park</i>	<i>Quabbin Reservation</i>	<i>Off-Reservation</i>	<i>Quabbin Reservoir</i>	<i>Regulating Ponds</i>	<i>Off-Watershed Ponds¹</i>
Off-road Bicycling	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘	⊘

Discussion

This policy is based not only on regulation but also on observations of the growing popularity of mountain biking, particularly single-track riding, in the area and of unauthorized trails being created on DCR lands in the system. For example, the photos below show an unauthorized single-track trail found by DCR foresters on clearly posted DCR reservation lands. This trail crosses wetlands (left). The trail makers dismantled historic stone walls (right). This activity and associated activities introduces sediments, chemicals, and pathogens. This is a new policy because the identified activity in the area was not detailed in the 1998 Plan.



¹ South Spectacle Pond, Bassett Pond, and Peppers Mill Pond are off-watershed ponds.

Sledding

Policy

Sledding or any other kind of sliding activity is prohibited on the Quabbin Reservoir, dams, or other structures, and in all restricted areas including but not limited to: the Quabbin Reservoir, Prescott Peninsula, Reservoir islands, plowed roads, and along the baffle dams. Limited sledding is allowed with adequate snow cover according to the general access restrictions.

Summary

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Quabbin Park</i>	<i>Quabbin Reservation</i>	<i>Off-Reservation</i>	<i>Quabbin Reservoir</i>	<i>Regulating Ponds</i>	<i>Off-Watershed Ponds¹</i>
Sledding	<input type="checkbox"/> ²	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

General Restrictions: General public access within the Quabbin Reservoir Watershed System is restricted to one hour before sunrise and one hour after sunset through gates or designated (posted) areas only. Any activity which injures or defaces the property of the Commonwealth is strictly prohibited.

Discussion

The use of sleds or other nonmotorized snow toys is prohibited because sliding on the dam, dike, or other restricted areas may impact the integrity of the structures, and can be very unsafe because of the dam and dike's steep slopes.

This 1998 Policy has not changed.

¹ South Spectacle Pond, Bassett Pond, and Peppers Mill Pond are off-watershed ponds.

² Sledding or any other kind of sliding activity is prohibited on the reservoir, the dams and other structures.