

CHAPTER 4: OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

Introduction

With its rolling hills, cascading waters, deep forests, open meadows, and abundance of open space, the Route 112 Scenic Byway corridor is an extraordinary outdoor playground for residents and visitors alike. Opportunities to hike, camp, swim, boat, cross-country ski, hunt, fish, and cycle abound in the region. In the Hampshire County section of the corridor, there are nearly 30 square miles of open space available for multiple recreational opportunities, including 5,803 acres within state forests and parks, 10,669 acres within wildlife management areas, and 1,919 acres within other significant open space lands. The greatest recreational treasures in Hampshire County include the Westfield River with its federal Wild and Scenic designation, and the extensive 7,900-acre wilderness area created by the adjoining lands of the Knightville Dam Wildlife Management and Recreation Area, the Gilbert A. Bliss State Forest, and the Hiram H. Fox Wildlife Management Area.

The Outdoor Recreational Resources chapter is an inventory of recreational resources developed through a review of Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation listings, Mass Wildlife listings, Massachusetts GIS, and narratives within the Open Space and Recreation Plans of Byway towns. Resources are described here by type of facility (State Forest and Parks, and Wildlife Management Areas) and by type of activity (hiking trails, camping, swimming, boating, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing, hunting and fishing, bicycling, and golfing).



The Westfield River Wildwater Races, an annual spring event for more than 55 years, attracts boating enthusiasts from across the northeast.

While the inventory in this chapter focuses on the recreational resources within the corridor, there are several nearby resources (accessible from the byway) that are so important to the region that they have been included here. Most importantly, these involve the lands contiguous to the Knightville Dam Wildlife Management and Recreation Area: the Gilbert A. Bliss State Forest and Indian Hollow Campground.

State Forests and Parks

The 5,803 acres of state forests and parks within the corridor are managed by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. State forests and parks are managed for both recreation and forestry resources. Of the six forests and parks within the Hampshire County part of the corridor, D.A.R. State Forest and C.M. Gardner State Park offer the greatest range of recreational opportunities.

Goshen

D.A.R. State Forest – 1,700 acres

Located on Route 112 just north of the Goshen town center, D.A.R. State Forest offers a popular beach for swimming on Upper Highland Lake, a shady picnic area and pavilion, and camping. The forest was established in 1929 when the Daughters of the American Revolution donated 1,020 acres to the Commonwealth. Almost 750 additional acres have been acquired since then, including the Upper and Lower Highland Lakes. The forest includes miles of mixed-use trails through northern hardwood-conifer forest. In addition, the park offers camping, boating, and snowmobiling, among other outdoor recreation activities. There is a handicapped accessible trail that runs along the forested shoreline of Upper Highland Lake, providing scenic water views. The Goshen fire tower, located within the state forest, provides spectacular views of the Connecticut River Valley.

Cummington

Bryant Mountain State Forest – 617 acres

Located just south of West Cummington, Bryant Mountain is one of the higher summits in Massachusetts at 2,080 feet, and was once home to the Berkshire Snow Basin Ski Area. DCR reports that there are no official trails at Bryant Mountain, but that the former ski trails can provide access for wildlife viewing.

Gilbert A. Bliss State Forest – 2,486 acres

Located within the Route 112 study area, but along Route 143 in Chesterfield, the Gilbert A. Bliss State Forest runs along the East Branch of the Westfield River, north of the Knightville Dam Wildlife Management Area. The 9-mile long East Branch Trail passes through the Forest along the river.

Worthington

Worthington State Forest – 183 acres

This state forest is located off of Route 143, within one mile of the intersection with Route 112 in Worthington town center. Within this state forest are the headwaters of Watts Stream, a tributary to Little River.

Huntington

Huntington State Forest –732 acres

Just east of Route 112, along Huntington’s border with Montgomery, the Huntington State Forest edges Roaring Brook to the west, and provides hiking and mountain bike opportunities.

C.M. Gardner State Park – 85 acres

Located in the rolling hills along a scenic section of the Westfield River’s East Branch, C.M. Gardner State Park offers opportunities for hiking, fishing and boating. A wooded picnic area is available on the banks of the river. The land was given for a state park in memory of Charles M. Gardner of Huntington, farmer, writer and National Grange leader for 34 years. Nearby are two impressive flood control dams managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Knightville Dam and Littleville Dam each over 160 feet high. The southern area of the state park is known as “40 Gorge.”

Wildlife Management Areas

In addition to state forests and parks, the Route 112 corridor in Hampshire County also has over 10,669 acres of wildlife management areas overseen by Mass Wildlife. A great variety of species and wildlife can be found in the management areas along Route 112, from bogs to rivers to upland forests.

Goshen

Lily Pond Wildlife Area – 282 acres

Surrounding the 30-acre Lily Pond, which resembles a flooded bog, this management area is home to waterfowl species such as great blue heron, as well as moose, bear, otter and beaver. Hemlock and white pine make up approximately 90 percent of the tree cover in this relatively flat to gently rolling woodland. Access to this management area is from Ball Road, which can be reached from Route 112. There is no formal parking lot at this management area, though a small log landing provides parking for a few vehicles.

Cummington

Paul Cuddy Wildlife Management Area – 86 acres

Located south of Route 112 and Chesterfield State Forest, this wildlife management area provides access to the Westfield River.

Cummington Wildlife Management Area– 194 acres

This management area is located on the north side of Route 112 and north of the Chesterfield State Forest.

Powell Brook Wildlife Management Area – 224 acres

This management area is comprised of moderately steep, northeast facing slopes, forested with a mixture of northern hardwoods and softwoods. Powell Brook, a cold-water stream, forms much of the northern boundary of the area. Access to the area is off of Powell Road, just south of the Bryant Homestead and Five Corners.

Worthington

Fox Den Wildlife Management Area - 3,770 acres

This large management area has several non-contiguous parcels within the towns of Worthington, Middlefield, and Chester. In Worthington, a large parcel borders the Middle Branch of the Westfield River, and has access from River Road in West Worthington. Northern hardwoods of American beech, maples, birches, white ash, along with scattered white pine comprise most of the forest with hemlock found along stream corridors, shaded ravines, and poor drainage areas. Several small unnamed brooks flow across the various parcels. Tuttle Brook and the Middle Branch of the Westfield River have excellent trout habitat. Deer, turkey, ruffed grouse, snowshoe hare, bear, bobcat, fisher and occasionally moose inhabit the area. Blackburnian warbler and yellow-rumped warbler nest in the spruces. Mourning warbler nest in early successional clear-cuts. Many species of dragonflies inhabit the clear, cold waters of the Westfield River.

Hiram H. Fox Wildlife Management Area – 2,951 acres

This large management area is located in four communities: Worthington, Chesterfield, Chester, and Huntington. The area encompasses two large interconnected parcels, bisected by Route 112, of rolling hills with some steep ledges and gullies. A portion of Moss Meadow Brook and its headwaters are located in the western parcel. The Little River, which passes through the eastern parcel, is stocked with trout. Deer, grouse, raccoon, snowshoe hare, gray squirrel, turkey, bear and numerous non-game species can also be found in the management area.

Huntington

Knightville Dam Wildlife Management and Recreation Area – 2,430 acres

In addition to spectacular views from Route 112, this wildlife management and recreation area provides hiking, fishing, and hunting opportunities to visitors of the area. The area, owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, can be accessed from Route 112, just south of the Hiram H. Fox State Wildlife Management Area. Through a cooperative lease agreement with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mass Wildlife manages 296 acres of the area for fishing, hunting, and preservation of the grasslands within the seasonally dry bed reservoir for the East Branch of the Westfield River. The vegetation is grassy and bushy on the seasonally flooded plain. Portions of the land above the floodplain are forested in mature hardwoods and softwoods. Woodcock, grouse, cottontail rabbit, gray squirrel, raccoon, deer, moose and numerous other species inhabit the area. The river is stocked with trout,

and the area is stocked with pheasant. In summertime and early autumn the open areas of the basin have spectacular blooms of wildflowers. These old fields attract many species of songbirds and butterflies. The area just below the dam has a historic house, picnic tables, fireplaces, universally accessible public restrooms, drinking water and a picnic shelter. Groups may reserve the shelter in advance for a modest fee. Each spring, water releases from the Knightville Dam are coordinated with those from nearby Littleville Lake to provide challenging flows for the annual Westfield River Wildwater Races. Note: depending upon flood control activities, special rules and regulations of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers may be in effect in this area.

Huntington Wildlife Conservation Restrictions/Easements– 732 acres

Mass Wildlife also has three large lots in Huntington for which they have negotiated and purchased conservation restrictions, including easements for public access of these lands for non-motorized recreational enjoyment. These lots, which do not have any marked trails or designated parking areas, include the following:

The Stanton Lot (249 acres) is located along the western side of Route 112 in Huntington, just west of the Knightville Dam Wildlife Management and Recreation Area.

The Stanton-Clapp Lot (78 acres) is a mixed forest with white pine, hemlock-hardwoods mix, and oak hardwoods mix. The white pines along the road frontage have a dense deciduous understory composed of striped maple, witch hazel, sassafras and mountain laurel. The property has 1,050 feet of frontage along the Westfield River, which is stocked with rainbow and brown trout. Access to this wildlife area is through a right-of-way over private property off Montgomery Road, near Route 112.

The Stanton-Cook & Beesaw Lots (405 acres) have several timber types, including oak/hardwoods, northern hardwoods, and hemlock/hardwoods. The understory is composed of mountain laurel, striped maple, hop hornbeam and witch hazel. Cold Brook and several small streams flow across the area to eventually join the West Branch of the Westfield River. The Chester-Blandford State Forest abuts the northwestern boundary. There is no formal parking, but there is 4,050 feet of road frontage along the south side of Route 20.

Other Significant Open Spaces

Cummington

The William Cullen Bryant Homestead– 195 acres

Maintained by the Trustees of the Reservation, the William Cullen Bryant Homestead was the boyhood home and inspiration to one of America's foremost 19th-century poets. The

site, which boasts one of the last old growth forests in the region, has prompted the conservation of over 970 acres of actively managed surrounding farm and forest land. The homestead contains a visitors' center, restrooms, picnic areas, and hiking trails.

Worthington

Road's End Wildlife Sanctuary, Massachusetts Audubon Society– 157 acres

The sanctuary runs along the height of a long ridge and offers occasional views of the surrounding hills. The extensive forest attracts many woodland bird species. Bluebird and tree swallows have been seen in the meadow. You can often find beaver in the wetlands and the pond; other resident mammals include bear, otter, and coyote. The sanctuary, which features a short loop trail, can be accessed from Route 112, just south of the intersection with Capen Road, from a dirt road running west called Corbett Road.

Huntington

Littleville Lake– 1,567 acres

Managed by the Army Corps of Engineers, Littleville Lake is located about one mile off Route 112 in Huntington and Chester. The park offers visitors opportunities to enjoy a variety of outdoor recreation activities. The 280-acre lake is formed by a large dam across the Middle Branch of the Westfield River. Swimming and camping are prohibited as Littleville Lake serves as a backup water supply reservoir for the city of Springfield, Massachusetts. The undeveloped areas of Littleville Lake are managed to preserve and promote the forest and wildlife resources. The hundreds of acres of hemlock, pine and mixed hardwoods are managed by Corps personnel to provide timber and fuel wood, improve wildlife habitat and to insure water quality. Miles of roads and the Eagle Ridge Trail provide opportunities for hiking and mountain biking.

Hiking Trails

Hiking trails can be found in many of the state forests, parks, and conservation areas along the Route 112 Scenic Byway corridor. Extensive trail systems can be found at D.A.R. State Forest in Goshen and along the East Branch of the Westfield River, starting at the Knightville Dam Wildlife Management Area in Huntington. The William Cullen Bryant Homestead, Deer Hill Reservation, and Gilbert Bliss State Forest in Cummington also have hiking trails.

Goshen

D.A.R. State Forest features fifteen miles of trails. The D.A.R. has several long hiking trails, including the Long Trail, Moose Run, Darling Trail, Twining Brook Trail and Beaver Pond Loop. There are combined hiking and bridle trails, including the Black Bear Trail, Bobcat

Trail, Turkey Trail, Tilton Farm Trail, Town Trail, Camp Howe Trail, Sunset Trail, Porcupine Trail and Boy Scout Trail.

Cummington

The William Cullen Bryant Homestead has 2.5 miles of hiking trails on the property, including the Rivulet Trail, which traverses the site of old growth forest and runs close to the Rivulet Brook. The area was inspiration for Bryant's famous 1824 poem, *The Rivulet*.

Arunah Hill Natural Science Center has over 60 acres of pristine natural forests, with 6 miles of marked & maintained trails. There are many more miles of unmarked and uncharted paths at the center as well.

Gilbert Bliss State Forest See description for East Branch Trail below.

Huntington

The nine-mile long **East Branch Trail** is a major scenic path that runs from the Knightville Dam Wildlife Management Area north through the Gilbert Bliss State Forest to the Chesterfield Gorge Reservation in Chesterfield. The trail follows the historic river road along the west side of the Westfield River, a designated National Wild and Scenic River. Along the east side of the river in this section is the **Claude M. Hill Trail**, which runs from the Knightville Dam to the Indian Hollow Campground.

C.M. Gardner State Park has several short walking trails.

Littleville Lake has 14 miles of trails on old cart roads that run on both sides of the lake, connecting with Goss Hill, Fiske, and Kinnie Brook roads. The trailhead for Eagle Ridge Trail is located at the second gate, on the way to the boat ramp.

Camping

There are a variety of camping options accessible via the Route 112 Scenic Byway corridor, from public camping sites in state forest and parks to privately managed youth sleep-away camps.

Goshen

At **D.A.R. State Forest** camping is available from mid-May through mid-October in the designated campgrounds. There is one campground located near the nature center and Upper Highland Lake, offering 51 wooded campsites with showers and a private beach. Another wooded group site is located on the northern edge of the forest, by Twinning Brook Pond. **Camp Howe** is a 4-H youth camp on Aberdeen Road, adjacent to the DAR State Forest. The phone number is: (413) 268-7635. **Camp Holy Cross**, a facility of the Diocese of

Springfield since 1930, is a youth summer camp that contains over 250 acres of woods and fields situated on the Upper Highland Reservoir in the D.A.R. State Forest. The phone number is: (413) 684-0125.

Cummington

Established as a homestead by Arunah Bartlett in the mid 1800's, **Arunah Hill Natural Science Center** was incorporated as a non-profit organization in 1992 to create and maintain a dark sky observing site; an environmental, botanical, and wildlife preserve; a research facility for astronomy and science; and an educational facility for astronomy, science, and nature. Camping is encouraged and free at the Arunah Hill Natural Science Center. Camping facilities are in a natural and pristine state. The center requires campers to give prior notification of camping on site. **Shire Village Camp** is a youth summer sleep-away camp near Cummington town center.

Worthington

The **Berkshire Park Camping Area** is located high in the hills on 246 acres of forest land. The elevation is 1,423 feet above sea level, well above the high temperatures and humidity. The campground is at the end of Harvey Road, one mile into the woods off Old Post Road (can be accessed from Worthington town center). This camping area offers children's activities, pool swimming, hiking/mountain bike trails, volleyball/badminton, horseshoes, adult craft lessons, playground equipment, pond fishing, an arcade and hay rides.

Huntington

Indian Hollow Campground (Knightville Dam Wildlife Management Area), a large group camping site, is located at the northern end of the basin for the Knightville Dam reservoir in Chesterfield. It is owned and maintained by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and is available by reservation to community groups such as churches, schools, scouts and clubs.

Swimming

Goshen

Within the **D.A.R. State Forest**, there are two beaches along the southern edges of Upper Highland Lake. One beach, located next to the camping sites, is designated only for campers, and is unguarded. The other beach is available for day-use, and is guarded in the summer months.

Huntington

In Huntington, visitors can also take a dip into pools of the cool-running East Branch of the Westfield River at the **Knightville Dam Recreation Area**, but none of these are officially

sanctioned swimming spots. **C.M. Gardner State Park** has a roped off swimming area in the East Branch of the Westfield River (a narrow lake at this point) with a beach.

Boating

Along much of its stretch in Hampshire County, the Route 112 Scenic Byway follows the East Branch of the **Westfield River**, a designated National Wild and Scenic River. There are opportunities to access the East Branch of the Westfield River for canoeing and kayaking along Routes 112/9 in Cummington at many of the state highway turnout areas. This section of the river has many small riffles and rapids (Class I and II) and can only be run in times of high water.



Kayakers enjoy a quiet moment in an eddy on the East Branch of the Westfield River.

Police Department. These same sections of river can be run at times of higher water or when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has a scheduled water release at Knightville Dam. There are many significant rapids on the Knightville-Huntington section of the river (Class III and IV), and this segment should only be attempted by experienced whitewater boaters. Access points to the river in Huntington are at the Knightville Dam, and at the Route 112 Bridge in Huntington Center.

The Westfield River Wildwater Races are held each spring (typically the third weekend in April) on the East Branch of the Westfield River in Huntington, and watched by hundreds of spectators from Route 112. There is an 8-mile novice segment run from Huntington Center to Russell on Saturday, and an expert segment of the river race, run from the Knightville Dam to Huntington Center on Sunday. Additional information is available through the Huntington

For flatwater boating enthusiasts, there are two boat ramps on **Upper Highland Lake** in the D.A.R. State Forest in Goshen, and one boat ramp on **Lower Highland Lake**. These lakes are small, and generally suitable for canoes, kayaks and similar small craft. At the 280-acre

Littleville Lake, the Huntington access area provides a boat ramp and parking area. Motors, however are limited to a maximum of 10 horsepower. Canoes may be launched at the upper end of the reservoir in the Dayville area. Note that swimming and camping are prohibited at Littleville Lake because the lake serves as a backup water supply reservoir for the City of Springfield, Massachusetts. **Norwich Pond** in Huntington is described as a “jewel in the hills.” The lake is ideal for small craft, rowboats, canoes, small sailboats, and low-speed motor boats. The one public boat ramp off Pisgah Road in Huntington is the only public access to the pond.

Cross-Country Skiing and Snowshoeing

There are many trails for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing in the state forests, parks, and conservation areas along the Route 112 Scenic Byway corridor.

Goshen

D.A.R. State Forest features fifteen miles of trails. The D.A.R. has several long trails, including the Long Trail, Moose Run, Darling Trail, Twining Brook Trail and Beaver Pond Loop. DAR grooms many of these trails and has a warming hut that rents sit skies.

Cummington

The William Cullen Bryant Homestead has 2.5 miles of trails on the property. **Arunah Hill Natural Science Center** has over 60 acres of pristine natural forests with 6 miles of marked and maintained trails. There are many more miles of unmarked and uncharted paths at the Center as well.

Huntington

The nine-mile long **East Branch Trail** is a major scenic path that runs north from the Knightville Dam Wildlife Management Area through the Gilbert Bliss State Forest to the Chesterfield Gorge Reservation in Chesterfield. The trail follows the Westfield River, a designated National Wild and Scenic River. **The Knightville Dam** area also offers vast opportunities for skiing and snowshoeing. The **C.M. Gardner State Park** in Huntington has several short walking trails that are suitable for snowshoeing or skiing. **Littleville Lake** has 14 miles of trails on old cart roads that run on both sides of the lake.

Hunting and Fishing

Hunting and fishing are permitted in all state wildlife management areas and in most state forests and parks. Hunting seasons are established by the Massachusetts Division Fisheries and Wildlife. See their website for information:

http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/dfw_toc.htm. Note that a license from the Massachusetts

Division Fisheries and Wildlife is required to fish, hunt or trap. For more information, see: http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/recreation/licensing/license_fees.htm or call 508-792-7270.

D.A.R. State Forest in Goshen offers excellent fishing opportunities on both Upper and Lower Highland Lakes. During the winter months ice fishing is popular. The **Westfield River** is one of the best trout rivers in the state. It offers plenty of native brown and rainbow trout, and Mass Wildlife stocks the river with trout and salmon fry early every spring. Running from the town of Savoy, the river is accessible along Route 9/112 in Cummington at many highway turn-out locations. As it runs southeasterly to Chesterfield and into the Trustees of Reservations' Chesterfield Gorge and Gilbert Bliss State Forest, the river has many other excellent spots, some of which must be earned with some bushwhacking. Wading spots are easy to find, as are the clearings where you can find enough room for fly casting. The deep pools in the lower river hold fish throughout the season. The upper Westfield River is also one of the few successful spawning areas in the state for Atlantic salmon and is also home to other migratory fish.

In Worthington, **Berkshire Park Camping Area** offers pond fishing opportunities. **C. M. Gardner State Park** in Huntington is located along a scenic section of the East Branch of the Westfield River. This state park offers opportunities for fishing along this section of the River. In Huntington, **Knightville Dam Wildlife Management and Recreation Area** offers fishing and hunting opportunities. The river is stocked with trout in the spring and the surrounding hills, which provide prime upland game habitat, are stocked with pheasants in the fall. **Littleville Lake** is a favorite year-round spot for fishermen. Trout, bass, yellow perch and smelt are major species found in the lake. Hunting and fishing are permitted in accordance with posted restrictions and Massachusetts Fish and Wildlife laws. **Norwich Pond** is well stocked with trout each spring. Anglers also use this 122-acre natural great pond in winter months to catch occasional large bass or leftover trout. Fishing tapers off in summer months, however, when conflict with other uses is high. Norwich Pond is located on Pisgah Road off of Route 66, and there is a public access site for the pond up the road about 1.5 miles on the left.

Bicycling

In the Pioneer Valley region, there is a wealth of lightly-traveled and scenic roads outside the urban areas of the Valley as a resource for bicycle transportation and tourism. The greatest concentration of such routes is in the Hilltowns. Route 112 is considered to be one of the best cycling roads due to its well paved conditions, wide shoulders, and breath-taking scenery. It was identified by the Pioneer Valley Bicycling Map as a main bicycling route in the Hilltowns. There are also some good off-road bicycling opportunities at the state parks and forests and at wildlife management areas. **D.A.R. State Forest** in Goshen features a

New England Mountain Bike Association (NEMBA) trail up the steep hill to the fire tower at the forest's high point. In Huntington, the nine-mile East Branch Trail runs north from **the Knightville Dam Wildlife Management and Recreation Area** through the **Gilbert A. Bliss State Forest** to the Chesterfield Gorge Reservation in Chesterfield. The trail follows the Westfield River, a designated National Wild and Scenic River.

Golfing

Worthington

The **Worthington Golf Club** was founded in 1904. It is an 88 acre, nine-hole course located 1,700 feet above sea level. The 5,700 yard design offers a challenge to anyone and superb views of the surrounding hills. The golf season begins during mid April and ends on October 31st. The club also features a comfortable restaurant and lounge with full bar and menu and great views of the golf course and surrounding hills.

Off-Road Vehicles

Off-road vehicles (ORVs) are allowed in a limited number of the state forests and parks in western Massachusetts, none of which are located in the Byway corridor study area.

Snowmobiling

The *Massachusetts Snowmobile Corridor Trail Map 2006*, available from the Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts, shows where snowmobile corridors and some secondary trails are located in the Byway study area. More detailed information and maps of local trails are available from local snowmobile organizations in the towns along the Byway. Snowmobiles are allowed in the Route 112 Scenic Byway corridor on designated trails in the **Catamount, DAR, and the H.O. Cook State Forests**. It should be noted that the snowmobile trails in the region are seasonal snowmobile trails. Trails on private property are often governed by written agreements with the property owner, stipulating maintenance responsibilities in return for access. For the most part, neither the public nor the private trails serve as off-road vehicle (ORV) trails in warmer weather.

More information on local snowmobile trails and conditions can be obtained from the following organizations:

Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts
P.O. Box 386
Conway, MA 01341
413-369-8092

www.sledmass.com

Hilltown Snowmobile Club, Ashfield
Maintains and grooms trails in Ashfield, Plainfield, and Holly
Contact: Mike Dufresne (413) 628-9964

Goshen Highlanders Snowmobile Club, Goshen
Maintains and grooms trails in Goshen
Contact: www.goshenhighlanders.com
Jerry Bird (413) 268-8363
Bill and Deb Turner (413) 268-3145

Worthington Snowmobile Club
Maintains and grooms trails in Worthington
Contact: Bob Gilbert (413) 238-5878

Universal Access

Handicapped accessibility to recreational areas is a priority for each of the Hampshire County towns along the byway. All make mention of this in their needs assessment and/or goals of their Open Space and Recreation Plans. For the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, DCR's Universal Access Program is dedicated to providing outdoor recreation opportunities in state parks for visitors of all abilities. Accessibility to the state parks and forests is achieved through site improvements, specialized adaptive recreation equipment, and accessible recreation programs. DCR Park Interpreters include visitors with disabilities in nature walks and interpretive programs scheduled seasonally around the state. Assistive listening equipment is available upon request at many parks. Recorded brochures, walks, and tours are also available at some parks. For further information, to request information in alternative formats, or to request American Sign Language interpretation for any DCR program, please contact the Universal Access Program office at P.O. Box 484, Amherst, MA 01004. Or call 413-545-5353 voice; 413-577-2200 TTY.

Universal access has been made available to beaches, swimming, fishing, boating, camping, hiking, picnicking and vistas throughout the Commonwealth. In the Route 112 Scenic Byway region, the **DAR State Forest** provides universal access to many recreational activities. This facility provides accessible beaches, boating (flatwater kayaking), camping, fishing, picnicking, rest rooms and hiking trails. The state forest features an accessible one-half mile stabilized stone dust trail that travels through the woods alongside Upper Highland Lake. The trail includes benches, a fishing pier, and lakeside views. During the winter months, DCR operates a warming hut that rents sit skies.

Findings and Recommendations

Findings	Recommendations
There are several large disconnected tracts of recreation and wildlife lands.	Establish greenways strategy to connect large tracts of land for enhanced recreation opportunities and wildlife habitat. (Note: through Commonwealth Connections, the Division of Conservation and Recreation’s Greenways program is looking at: a) connections of the Westfield River to its various branches; and 2) a potential greenway stretching from Conway SF to DAR to the Westfield River.)
The Westfield River is among the greatest recreational treasures, but access is limited.	Seek funds to create turn-outs and car-top boat access points or fishing access. Members of the Route 112 Byway Advisory Committee for Hampshire County have noted that preserving the sense of a wilderness experience, requires more access points, but with fewer parking spaces at each of these points. Purchase lands for public access, including use of funds from Public Access Board at Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game.
The East Branch Trail, which connects nine miles of floodplain, woodlands, and riverbank from the Knightville Dam to the Chesterfield Gorge is an outstanding resource. It is intended as the first leg in a loop trail that will connect the Westfield basin.	Work with Westfield Wild and Scenic Advisory Committee and other partner groups to advance and develop the Westfield River basin loop trail.
Hiking access and trails on state lands needs improvement.	Seek funds to build new trails in previously inaccessible but scenic state lands. As mentioned above, members of the Route 112 Byway Advisory Committee for Hampshire County have noted that preserving the sense of a wilderness experience, requires more access points, but with fewer parking spaces at each of these points.
Cummington and Worthington in particular are lacking in amenities and trails for recreational activities.	Work with The Trustees of Reservations (TTOR) to explore feasibility of establishing turnouts and trails on lands where they have conservation restriction easements. At Upland Meadow Farm, TTOR has a 90-acre conservation easement, which encompasses

	Roaring Brook. TTOR also has conservation easements that extend all the way from Route 9 through to Worthington Center.
Though used frequently for fishing and ice skating, Worthington's town park is too small to serve the needs of the community. Its parking is lacking, equipment is in poor repair, and it is located too close to Route 112.	Work to establish a larger, more accessible town park in Worthington. Possible funding sources might include Highlands Community Initiative for design, and Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services self-help for acquisition and construction.
There are many old roads and even several old hiking or snowmobile trails associated with Route 112 that are no longer in use.	Conduct survey and explore potential for promoting these old roads and trails for current use as trails.
Knightville Dam Wildlife Management Area holds tremendous potential for increased recreation	Work with Mass Wildlife and U.S. Army Corp of Engineers to improve trail systems in the reservoir basin, and to evaluate potential for summer dam releases for recreational boating.
Lack of access to Lily Pond in Goshen for canoeing and kayaking.	Work with Mass Wildlife to establish access to Lily Pond for canoeing and kayaking.
Limited handicapped accessibility to recreation areas.	Increase recreation opportunities for all.
Trash and debris are perennial problems at many of the recreation areas.	Identify owners of existing recreation areas and define options for trash collection. Explore partnerships with owners and other non profits in handling issues of maintenance, including Audubon, The Trustees of Reservations, Appalachian Mountain Club, and Nature Conservancy. Trash collection ought to be a consideration in the establishment of any new recreation areas as well.
There is a lack of resources, support and infrastructure for outdoor enthusiasts.	Encourage the establishment of outdoor recreation related businesses (bike shops, boating, camping supplies); also encourage current businesses to promote public restrooms as way to get clientele into their shops.
The Pork Barrel area is one of the largest tracts of wilderness in the region.	Work to protect the Pork Barrel area, discouraging further development of trails into the area.
Turnouts at key recreation resources, most notably Knightville Dam Recreation Area, and Gardner State Park, are not plowed in winter.	Work with MassHighway and others to promote plowing of turnouts for winter recreational access.