



**CITY OF NORTHAMPTON, MASSACHUSETTS
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS**

**125 Locust Street
Northampton, MA 01060**

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Donna LaScaleia
Director

Policy for Public Access on Watershed Land

Director of Public Works: Donna LaScaleia

Water Superintendent: Keith Snape

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This Policy for Public Access on Watershed Land (Policy) is implemented as a component of the City of Northampton's Watershed Resource Protection Plan (WRPP) (2022). The WRPP and this Policy comply with Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) regulatory requirements.

General Public Access Is Not Allowed

The Northampton Department of Public Works (DPW) does not allow general public access on any of the active drinking water reservoirs (per 310 CMR 22.20B(6)) or within the watershed land owned by the City of Northampton, including land surrounding the groundwater wells.

Enforcement

Anyone found to be trespassing on City-owned watershed property will be subject to a fine of up to \$1,000 (per MGL c.266, §123A). Anyone polluting, or intending to pollute, the drinking water reservoirs will be subject to a fine of up to \$5,000 and may face imprisonment (per MGL c.266, §123A). Such trespassers and/or polluters are also subject to arrest per the provisions of applicable local and state laws.

Questions

Questions regarding the public access policy should be directed to the DPW at 413-587-1570 or dpwinfo@northamptonma.gov.

Rules Governing Public Access

The following rules apply to public access for all City-owned watershed property. This includes land surrounding the Mountain Street Reservoir, and the Francis P. Ryan/West Whately Reservoirs as well as the reservoirs themselves. (Property associated with Musante Beach in Leeds is exempt from these rules.)

Trespassing is not allowed on City-owned watershed property. Therefore, the following are PROHIBITED on all land owned by the City of Northampton for the purpose of watershed protection:

- Acts which pollute or may pollute the water supply;
- Littering or dumping of any sort;
- Acts which injure the property of the City of Northampton water supply system, including defacing, destruction or removal of any property, real or personal;

- The removal of trees, vegetation, gravel, topsoil, stones, boulders, or other earthen material;
- Construction of any object or structures;
- Cooking or other types of fires;
- Wading, swimming, boating or fishing in any reservoir or tributary;
- Sporting activities, such as orienteering, hunting, trapping or geocaching;
- Breach of peace, profanity or other disorderly conduct;
- Possession of and drinking of alcoholic beverages;
- Motorized vehicle use (including recreational vehicles), or use of bicycles, skis and other means of non-motorized transportation;
- Operation of unmanned aircraft systems (“drones”) on or above watershed property;
- Domestic animals;
- Possession or discharge of any weapon, firearm, fireworks, or other explosive; and
- Use and possession of all types of metal detectors or similar devices.

Exceptions

The Northampton DPW makes the following exceptions to the above rules:

- Educational research conducted by faculty, staff and students affiliated with certain federal research agencies and local colleges and universities is allowed if a negotiated Access License is in place with the City.
- Snowmobile riding on designated snowmobile trails only (riders must be members of the Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts, which has a fully executed Access License in effect), in strict compliance with the DPW’s written Policy for Snowmobile Use on City of Northampton Watershed Land;
- Hiking along Henhawk Trail in Williamsburg (Williamsburg residents only) (see attached for a copy of this agreement between the Town of Williamsburg and the City of Northampton);
- An annual bird count event by a group affiliated with the Audubon Society with yearly approval by the DPW);
- Passive recreation including hiking that is permitted on five parcels (Parcel 1 - a 26.5 acre parcel identified as lot 2.01 on map 419 in the Town of Conway, Parcel 2 - a 3.422 acre parcel identified as Parcel #16-0-06-2 in the Town of Whately, Parcels 3 & 4 - two 4.121-acre parcels identified as Parcel # 03-0-09-3 and 03-0-09-2 in the Town of Whately, and Parcel 5 – a 44-acre parcel identified as Lot 25-1 on Map B in the Town of Williamsburg). Recreation on these parcels is allowed in order to comply with Drinking Water Supply Grant requirements, which provided funding assistance for their purchase. Domestic animals are NOT allowed on these properties.

The City of Northampton is not liable for any personal injury or property damage associated with authorized recreational use of City owned property per MGL Chapter 21 Section 17c (known as the Recreational Use Statute).

*Persons interested in authorized access to City-owned land within watersheds to the public drinking water reservoirs are encouraged to submit their request in writing to:
DPW Director, 125 Locust Street, Northampton, MA 01060*