



# *The Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

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October 11, 2006

CERTIFICATE OF THE SECRETARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS  
ON THE  
NOTICE OF PROJECT CHANGE

PROJECT NAME: Mount Greylock Historic Parkway Rehabilitation  
PROJECT MUNICIPALITY: Adams, North Adams, Cheshire, New Ashford,  
Williamstown, Lanesborough  
PROJECT WATERSHED: Hoosic and Housatonic  
EOEA NUMBER: 12843  
PROJECT PROPONENT: MA Department of Conservation and Recreation  
DATE NOTICED IN MONITOR: September 11, 2006

Pursuant to the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (M. G. L. c. 30, ss. 61-62H) and Section 11.10 of the MEPA regulations (301 CMR 11.00), I have reviewed the Notice of Project Change (NPC) submitted on this project and hereby determine that it **does not require** further MEPA review.

As originally outlined in the Expanded Environmental Notification Form (EENF) submitted in July 2002, the project consisted of safety repairs and rehabilitation to 13.5 miles of roadways in the Mount Greylock State Reservation in Berkshire County. The reservation includes 12,000 acres in the Towns of North Adams, Adams, Cheshire, Williamstown, New Ashford, and Lanesborough. Included in the Reservation is the Mount Greylock Summit Historic District, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. This project includes repairs to the Mount Greylock summit roadways including Notch Road, Rockwell Road, and Summit Road.

The project involves parkway rehabilitation and associated activities including drainage improvements (involving substantial improvements to culverts); safety improvements;

improvements to and installation of retaining walls; and reestablishment of scenic overlooks and vistas. The project is a Demonstration Project under the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) Historic Parkways Initiative (HPI), an interagency initiative designed to preserve and restore the Commonwealth's historic parkways and associated features and significant scenic and cultural landscape resources. The project proponent, the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) has filed the NPC due to a lapse of time and because DCR proposes to add two utility lines into the road section of Summit Road.

### Jurisdiction

The project was subject to environmental review pursuant to Section 11.03(2)(b)(2) of the MEPA regulations because it will result in a prohibited "take" of two species protected under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA). The project as outlined in the ENF required a Conservation and Management Permit from the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP), and Orders of Conditions from the six municipalities in which the parkway is located. Because the proponent is an agency of the Commonwealth, MEPA jurisdiction extends to all aspects of the project that may cause significant Damage to the Environment as defined in the MEPA statute.

The proponent received a Conservation and Management Permit from NHESP in 2003. DCR has also received all required Orders of Conditions, and is currently requesting extensions on the Orders.

### Project Change Description

DCR has filed the NPC due to a lapse of time since the original 2002 filing of the EENF and because of the proposed addition of approximately 0.4 miles of electrical conduit and 0.8 miles of septic line within the existing road section of Summit Road. The proposed changes to the scope of work will facilitate future projects at the Mount Greylock Summit – the installation of a permanent septic system for the Bascom Lodge and the replacement of overhead utilities from Adams Overlook to Bascom Lodge with an underground line. The road cross section from the intersection of Summit, Notch and Rockwell Roads to the Summit will include a buried septic line, sized and designed to serve the current use of Bascom Lodge. From the Adams Overlook to Bascom Lodge the road section will include an electrical conduit sized to accommodate the lines currently running overhead to the Summit.

According to DCR, neither of these lines is proposed as part of an expansion of the Summit in any way, and both lines will be capped at both ends, rendering them inactive. These projects will be carried out in the future as separate projects under separate contracts. DCR determined that it was prudent to include the installation of the two lines in the road section while construction was underway to avoid the need to reopen the road in the future in this fragile environment.

### Wastewater

The NPC includes a proposed buried septic line which is intended at some time in the future to convey wastewater from the Bascom Lodge and other possible structures to a proposed septic system. Currently, Bascom Lodge operates on a tight tank and has to be emptied on a regular basis. The cost of servicing the tank is about \$40,000 per year and requires a tanker truck to transverse the road system twice weekly during peak season. DCR reasons that installing the utility lines while the road system is closed will prevent the access to the summit from being closed for an extended period of time in the future. In addition, installing the utility lines in conjunction with the road rehabilitation will avoid creating a secondary round of environmental impacts.

The line is not being extended further until the most appropriate leaching field is found, most likely near the Sperry Road Campground. DCR has no plans to proceed with the leaching field construction at this time. The future septic system to serve the Mt Greylock State reservation, together with the proposed buried septic line conveying wastewater from Bascom Lodge and other structures related to the septic system will require a MassDEP permit. The proponent should conduct a pre-permitting meeting with MassDEP prior to the proposed construction. The discussions should focus on the proposed septic system design flows, pipe design, and status of proposed sites for the future septic system, to determine whether the proposed buried septic line and system will be acceptable to MassDEP as part of a future BRP WP 63 or BRP WP 08 permit application. The septic system will require further environmental review, and the proponent must file a Notice of Project Change (NPC) for the wastewater system pursuant to Section 11.10 of the MEPA regulations when a proposed location and design are selected.

### Rare Species

NHESP has determined that the proposed limit of work associated with the roadway improvements is within the habitat of two plants state-listed as "Threatened:" Woodland Millet Grass (*Milium effusum*) and Large-leaved Goldenrod (*Solidago macrophylla*). NHESP issued a Conservation and Management Permit (003-025.DFW) for the Parkway Rehabilitation project following completion of MEPA review of the EENF. The previously issued permit has expired and is not eligible for an extension. According to NHESP, DCR has elected to submit a new permit application in accordance with 321 CMR 10.23 and 321 CMR 10.05.

The proponent has been in close contact with the NHESP and conducted botanical surveys along the roadway length to determine the current extent of the population of both plant species. Proposed transplantation sites identified in 2002/2003 will be revisited by a qualified botanist to determine if they remain suitable. The NPC includes the addition of septic lines and electrical lines which will be fully within the existing roadbed footprint of Summit Road. NHESP states in its comments on the NPC that these changes will not result in any additional "take" of either state-listed species. The NHESP has not yet received a formal Conservation and Management Permit application; however it has indicated that the project can be designed to meet the performance standards for the issuance of a permit.

Solid and Hazardous Waste

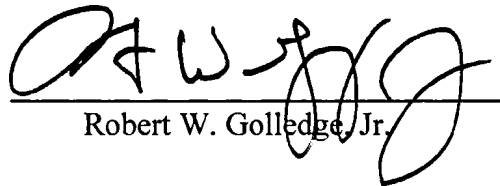
Following comments from MassDEP, all solid waste generated by this proposed project must be properly managed pursuant to 310 CMR 16.00 and 310 CMR 19.000. In addition, the proponent should note comments from the Bureau of Waste Site Cleanup regarding actions that must be taken if contaminated soils are encountered during excavation.

Conclusion

Based on a review of the information provided in the NPC, and after consultation with the relevant public agencies, I find that the potential impacts of this project change do not warrant the preparation of an EIR. No further MEPA review is required at this time.

October 11, 2006

Date

  
Robert W. Gollidge, Jr.

Comments Received:

- 9/28/2006 Pamela B. Weatherbee & Eleanor Tillinghast
- 9/28/2006 Joseph J. Nowak
- 10/2/2006 **Department of Environmental Protection, Western Regional Office**
- 10/4/2006 **Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program**

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