



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

**125 Locust Street  
Northampton, MA 01060**

**413-587-1570  
Fax 413-587-1576**

**Donna LaScaleia**  
*Director*

## **Policy for Public Access on Watershed Land**

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Director of Public Works: Donna LaScaleia

Water Superintendent: David Sparks

Date of Revision: September 2018

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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) (2017). 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.

### **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](mailto: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, the Francis P. Ryan/West Whately Reservoirs and the Roberts Meadow reservoir system, 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;
- 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:

- Snowmobile riding on designated snowmobile trails only (riders must be members of a snowmobile club that 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);
- Conducting bird counts by a local birding group affiliated with the Audubon Society with yearly approval by the DPW (bird counts are typically conducted in December);
- 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 to purchase these parcels;
- Educational research conducted by faculty, staff and students affiliated with Smith College, University of Massachusetts, Amherst Regional High School, the New England Wildflower Society and the USGS S.O. Conte Anadromous Fish Research Laboratory. Research projects taking place on watershed land shall have a negotiated Access License with the City.

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



Town of Williamsburg  
Board of Selectmen  
141 Main Street, P.O. Box 447  
Haydenville, Massachusetts 01039-0447  
Telephone/Fax (413) 268-8400

**Understanding between the Town of Williamsburg and the City of Northampton  
regarding access to and use of the Henhawk Trail in Williamsburg.**

It is acknowledged that the City of Northampton is actively engaged in an active watershed management plan on lands abutting Henhawk Trail.

It is acknowledged that the citizens of Williamsburg have long enjoyed the recreational use of the Henhawk trail and wish to continue to do so.

The City of Northampton will allow passive recreational and pedestrian trail uses on this trail.

No motorized vehicles will be allowed on the trail other than those allowed by any agreement between the City of Northampton and any club, association, or similar entity.

The trail shall not be listed on any regional or statewide maps of recreational trails.

Any coordinated hike by an organization in Williamsburg on any portion of the trail will be communicated before the hike to the Northampton Water Department as a matter of courtesy.

Dogs and other animals will not be allowed on the trail.

Trail Users shall take care not to engage in any activity which could pollute the water supply. These activities include but are not limited to: littering, dumping, fires, camping, entering streams, etc.

Parked cars shall not block access to the trail.

No part of this agreement constitutes any agreement as to actual ownership of the Henhawk trail.

Eric P. Cerreta, Chairman

3/15/07  
Date

Mary Clare Higgins, Mayor

3/22/07  
Date