



TRANSPORTATION STUDY ASSABET RIVER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

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TRANSPORTATION STUDY UPDATE NEWSLETTER

Public Meeting

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

TUESDAY,
FEBRUARY 7, 2012
7-9 PM

Presentation starts at
7:15 PM

Visitor Center

Assabet River NWR
680 Hudson Road
Sudbury, MA 01776

We look forward to your participation!



Visitor Center

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www.fws.gov/northeast/assabeteriver

PLEASE COME JOIN US AT THE SECOND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT MEETING!

In September 2011, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration, Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division, began a Transportation Study at the Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge (ARNWR) located in the towns of Hudson, Maynard, Stow and Sudbury, Massachusetts. The purpose of the transportation study is to evaluate the existing conditions at the Refuge and to identify a list of potential



actions to improve access to, and mobility within, the Refuge.

Over the past few months information has been gathered on existing transportation conditions and needs at the Refuge. This analysis, plus input received at a public open house in November and from other stakeholders, has been used to develop

a menu of potential transportation alternatives to help improve access to, and mobility within, the Refuge. Among the potential actions currently under consideration are future bicycle connections through the Refuge's south parcel to the proposed Central Mass Rail Trail, additional parking at the Refuge's main entrance, handicap accessible trails and canoe/kayak launch, and trail connections with adjacent state and municipal conservation lands.

The Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge is hosting a presentation and public meeting on Tuesday, February 7, 2012 to discuss the transportation planning study. The purpose of the upcoming meeting is to present the potential transportation projects, hear people's comments about the value and prioritization of the proposed projects, and to learn if there are any other projects that should be considered. The next steps in the transportation study will be to refine the projects based on the comments, do a technical and cost evaluation of each project, and identify the list of preferred near-term and long-term transportation projects for the Refuge.

Please join us at the public meeting to be held on February 7, 2012 at the Visitor Center located at 680 Hudson Road in Sudbury. The presentation starts at 7:15 pm.

Sincerely,

Carl Melberg, Natural Resource Planner
Eastern Massachusetts NWR Complex



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PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT TO DATE

To initiate the public involvement process, a Public Open House was held Nov. 9th at the Refuge. During the Open House, interactive displays were utilized to gather information from attendees. Refuge staff and representatives from the Consultant team were present to provide input and answer questions. Comments and completed surveys were recorded and gathered from the attendees.

Summary of Public Comments

We received many valuable and insightful comments and prepared the following brief summary of these comments, grouped into five broad categories.

Vehicle Access to the Refuge

There were many suggestions for aiding wayfinding to the Refuge. Many people suggested signs for the north and east gates on Route 117 at White Pond Road and Route 27 at Old Marlboro Road, respectively. Others suggested directional signs to the Refuge from Route 2, Route 20 and Route 495. ARNWR signs on Hudson Road near the Refuge's main entrance were suggested, along with installing a



streetlight at the entrance. There were mixed suggestions on building an east-bound left turn lane at the Hudson Road entrance.

Parking

ARNWR has plans to increase the capacity of parking at the North and East Gates. Suggestions were also made for preferred parking for hybrid vehicles and the addition of electric vehicle charging stations. There were also suggestions on paving all parking areas for ease of snow removal; and a strong preference to increase the amount of parking at the south entrance lot on Hudson Road. Most people felt that the parking lots at the Visitor Center are under-utilized, and therefore better signage to those lots was suggested.

Pedestrian Access and Connections

In the questionnaires provided, the public indicated they wanted both paved trails and trails with native materials, with a slight preference for native materials. Suggestion was also made to consider installing porous pavement. Within the Refuge, White Pond Road was noted as needing improvements and signs. Regarding community connections, it was noted that maintenance is needed on adjacent trail systems such as the Maynard school trail system and those in the abutting state forest lands. Connectivity to the Assabet River Rail Trail and the proposed Central Massachusetts Rail Trail were indicated as highly important.



Handicapped Accessibility

There were several suggestions about increasing handicapped accessibility in the Refuge. Some suggestions for trails to be made handicapped accessible include Hill Trail, Otter Alley and Puffer Pond. Vehicle access up to the fishing pier was suggested, as were making the canoe launch handicap accessible, policy changes to provide better accessibility for disabled or mobility-limited hunters, as well as providing a tram system for all visitors.

Bicycle Circulation and Regional Connections

Several opportunities exist to increase bicycle connectivity to and through the Refuge. In response to the questionnaire, many responded "YES" to promoting bicycle routes through the Refuge and through the southern section. The few that responded "NO" expressed concerns for wildlife and wanted to limit bicycles in the Refuge. Instead of biking through the Refuge, they suggested biking around the Refuge which would help eliminate other user conflicts. Suggestions on installing more bicycle racks to encourage users to park their bicycles at the entrance to trails were also made.



Contacts

TRANSPORTATION STUDY
ASSABET RIVER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE



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SAMPLE OF PROPOSED PROJECTS

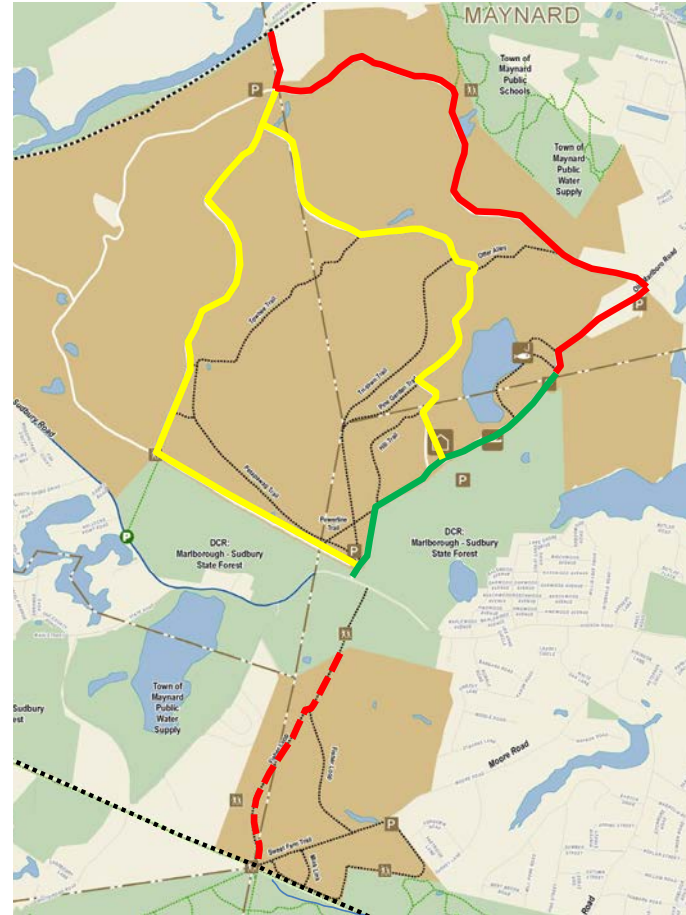
Wayfinding and Directional Signs



Expand Parking at Main Gate



Bicycle Circulation within the Refuge



Handicapped Access along Carbury's and Puffer Pond Trails



Trail Connection through State Forest



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