

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) is the largest landowner in the state of Massachusetts, managing close to 500,000 acres of property in the majority of the 351 cities and towns throughout the Bay State, including parks, forests, beaches, historic sites, reservoirs, watersheds, campgrounds, dams, and recreational facilities. DCR's mission is to protect, promote and enhance these natural, cultural, and leisure resources for the wellbeing of all. DCR refers to this vast portfolio of assets as the "common wealth" because they belong to the people of Massachusetts. In meeting today's responsibilities and planning for tomorrow, DCR's focus is on improving outdoor recreational opportunities and natural resource conservation; restoring and improving facilities; expanding public involvement; and establishing first-rate management systems and practices.

DCR is taking steps to reduce its carbon footprint and create a better experience for visitors and staff by electrifying their operations. In 2020, the agency released its Parkways Master Plan, which highlights the opportunity to improve park access and safety while expanding the regional greenway travel network for every mode of transportation. Climate change is a real concern and DCR is currently working on an electric vehicle (EV) Conversion Plan while collaborating with other departments, such as the Department of Energy Resources, to develop best practices based on lessons learned and offer guidance to stakeholders throughout this transition.



To date, DCR has acquired two dual-port EV charging stations at the North Point Maintenance Facility and Walden Pond State Reservation's Visitor Center. Both of these stations are active, and the Walden Pond State Reservation is available for public use. DCR is in the process of purchasing two new Chevy Bolts that will be used by the Park Ranger bureau, for use in the metropolitan Boston area. Cars are just the start of the electric conversion - DCR plans include transitioning other

types of equipment and machinery like tractors too! So far, DCR has purchased 12 fully electric John Deer tractors and Gators to replace current light duty gas pickup trucks. These Gators are currently being used at Walden Pond State Reservation, which is a “sacred” place for many Massachusetts residents.

“ Bringing electric equipment into our parks is a key strategy to meet our decarbonization goals in the coming years. ”

-Sarah White
Director of Climate Resilience at DCR

DCR is working towards converting all power tools and landscaping equipment to battery power with the help of its Accelerated Energy Program. Walden Pond State Reservation is an area included in this move toward electric powered equipment.



The advantages of using electric power tools include longer run times, energy efficiency, and less noise pollution. Park Supervisor Chris Hoffman said, **“The goal at Walden is to be able to do all the regular landscaping and maintenance with electric equipment. At this point, we have all the grass cutting, weed whacking, and leaf blowing for regular maintenance down.”**

You can watch Hoffman demonstrate some of the new all-electric grounds-keeping equipment already in use at Walden Pond State Reservation on this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hgf8UVKGNgQ>

The Visitor Center at Walden Pond is equipped with a 110,000 kWh solar array, which produces more clean energy into the grid than it uses. Walden Pond now acts as a carbon-neutral facility, free of any fossil fuels on site, including gas for equipment. DCR's short term goal is to purchase six additional EVs by the end of 2022, and to install four more dual-port stations at various locations across the state.



In the future, DCR wants to see the EV evolution momentum growing. The agency is currently developing a strategy to assess the fleet vehicle needs to include electric service vehicles.

“ The health and happiness of people across Massachusetts depends on the accessibility and quality of our natural resources, recreational facilities, and great historic landscapes. DCR continues to improve the conservation and resilience efforts in our property and every effort we make to do that takes us a step closer to ensuring that generations to come will enjoy our resources. ”

- Sarah White
Director of Climate Resilience at DCR