



**SPRINGFIELD WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION
P.O. BOX 995, SPRINGFIELD, MA 01101**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Springfield Water and Sewer Commission Issues Reminder
About Access to Intake, Cobble Mountain and Borden Brook Reservoirs and
Surrounding Watershed Land**

Swimming, Fishing, hiking, walking, and motorized activities prohibited on posted property

The Springfield Water and Sewer Commission (Commission) is reminding residents of and visitors to Russell, Blandford, and Granville that recreation on Commission-owned watershed land surrounding the Intake, Cobble Mountain or Borden Brook Reservoirs is not allowed.

The Intake, Cobble Mountain and Borden Brook Reservoirs are the primary drinking water supply for the Greater Springfield region, serving approximately 250,000 customers on a daily basis. The Commission owns and manages approximately 14,500 acres of protected forestland surrounding the reservoirs. Access to the reservoirs is prohibited, including to the Commission's smaller, adjacent reservoirs and ponds within Russell and Blandford. Recreation on watershed property – including walking, hiking, biking, fishing, swimming and motorized activities, such as the use of All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) or Off-Highway vehicles (OHVs), is also prohibited unless otherwise posted.

Protecting Public Health

The source water protection regulations and watershed restrictions are in place to protect the public drinking water supply from contamination. Recreational activities have the potential to introduce harmful contaminants and bacteria into the water supply and could cause soil compaction or erosion issues. Even small amounts of such contaminants can adversely impact water treatment processes. The



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use of motorized vehicles like ATVs can also transfer invasive plants, fungus, and diseases, threatening the native forest that acts as a natural filter to the public drinking water reservoirs.

Commission personnel, the Massachusetts State Police, the Massachusetts Environmental Police, and the Hampden County Sheriff's Department are coordinating again this summer to closely monitor watershed property and enforce public access restrictions. Individuals found to be trespassing or engaging in other prohibited activities on watershed land will be subject to applicable charges and fines.

Areas Open to Public Access

The Commission works cooperatively with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP), the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), and other land protection organizations to protect thousands of acres of forest lands within the Little River Watershed, an expansive area of forest, streams, and waterbodies located in Becket, Otis, Blandford, Russell, Granville, Westfield, and Tolland.

While access to Commission-owned watershed property is restricted, there are many areas within the Little River Watershed that are accessible to the public for passive recreation. More information on these publicly accessible areas, as well as permitted and prohibited activities, is available on the Commission's interactive watershed map, found at: <https://waterandsewer.org/education/recreation/>.

Drinking water is essential to daily life and public health, and providing the highest quality, uninterrupted supply of drinking water to the public is the Commission's top priority. The Commission appreciates the public's cooperation in maintaining a safe and clean water supply for the region.

More information about the Commission's watershed management activities is available at <https://waterandsewer.org/education/watershed-management/>. Anyone with further questions can contact the Commission at 413-452-1300 or info@waterandsewer.org.

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