

M | MASSACHUSETTS CONSERVATION VOTERS

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Environmental non-profit changes name and mission to benefit state parks

BOSTON – As state funding continues to significantly decline for Massachusetts parks, beaches, forests and other protected areas, a new organization has formed to ensure the long-term viability of these critical places that play a major contribution to tourism, recreation, education and quality of life.

Massachusetts Conservation Voters (MCV) will strive to keep voters and elected officials informed about the importance of supporting the operation, maintenance and improvement of our state’s open spaces, one of the first state park systems in the nation.

“The state budget for environmental programs suffered devastating reductions during the Great Recession, and the Dept. of Conservation and Recreation still has not recovered from those losses, particularly from the impact of deferred maintenance,” said MCV’s Executive Director Doug Pizzi. “In a state that has one of the oldest and largest state parks systems, MCV is one of the few statewide organizations whose sole focus is on giving residents and visitors the world class public parks they deserve.”

While there have been some modest increases in the DCR budget this year, over the last ten years DCR has lost 436 full-time positions, more than a third of its workforce. This has had a devastating impact on the agency’s ability to maintain nearly a half- million acres of open space, including parks, campgrounds, forests, ocean and fresh water beaches, swimming pools, 2,000 miles of walking and bike trails, skating rinks, ball fields, playgrounds, several of the Boston Harbor islands, and historic parkways. Reversing this trend so that DCR is fully able to carry out its mission is critical to maintaining an annual \$16 billion Massachusetts recreational economy.

MCV, formerly called the Massachusetts League of Environmental Voters (MLEV), has created a new website (www.massconservationvoters.com), where MCV members and the public will be able to follow how MCV engages in its mission, give feedback on our progress, and locate recreational opportunities across the state.

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“MCV is excited about the opportunity to assess and assist our park system so it may live up to the vision of its historical creators, who supported the development of the Olmsted and Elliot urban parks and the first Massachusetts state park reservation at Mt. Greylock,” Pizzi said. “We invite you to join us on that mission to protect and preserve these jewels for future generations.”

Anyone interested in joining MCV and helping to bring Massachusetts residents and visitors public parks and recreational facilities that we can all be proud of can log on to the website and join the friends and supporters who already belong to the organization. Our parks and the people who use them need your support.

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