
Fwd: Fw: Information on DCR project in Warwick

From Keith Ross <kross3594@gmail.com>

Date Mon 9/28/2026 6:24 PM

To Alan Genovese <supergee275@gmail.com>; Lizzie Alwan <lizziealwan@gmail.com>; Brian Snell Selectboard <hwilliamsnell@gmail.com>; Dianna Noble <nobled@town.warwick.ma.us>

 1 attachment (296 KB)

Telegram_Gazette_1961_05_19_22-WarwickSF-prison-camp.pdf;

see below

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From: **Ross, Keith** <kross@landvest.com>

Date: Mon, Sep 28, 2026, 6:00 PM

Subject: Fw: Information on DCR project in Warwick

To: Keith Ross <kross@hughes.net>

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From: Rossi, Nick F (DCR) <Nick.F.Rossi@mass.gov>

Sent: Tuesday, September 22, 2026 4:56 PM

To: Ross, Keith <kross@landvest.com>

Cc: Greer, Mackenzie M (DCR) <Mackenzie.M.Greer@mass.gov>; Amaral, Kendra (DCR) <Kendra.Amaral@mass.gov>

Subject: Information on DCR project in Warwick

Hello Keith,

I appreciate that you reached out to me a few weeks ago about the Town of Warwick's concerns regarding DCR's planned acquisition of the Whipple property on Richmond Road. I've been spending some time doing some research on the Warwick Prison Camp, and I wanted to share that information with you in case it is helpful.

To refresh, we spent some time discussing Article 97 and the merger of the CR on the Whipple land after the fee simple acquisition by DCR. You mentioned a specific concern that the merger of the CR may result in reduced protection of the land. You used the historic example of a former prison camp within Warwick State Forest on Richmond Road to illustrate the issue.

You may already know this, but Article 97 protects public conservation land beyond restricting transfers of legal interests. It is also a restriction on use. Land cannot be "used for any other purpose" other than the protection of open space, barring a 2/3 majority vote from the Massachusetts Legislature. Any new use beyond open space (outdoor recreation, habitat management, nature study, etc.) would be prohibited by Article 97. In addition, the [Open Space Act](#) requires that any land taken out of Article 97 must be replaced by other land to ensure no net loss of conserved land. This makes transfers or repurposing of land owned by DCR and other conservation agencies very challenging to do.

The above is particularly relevant because, while Warwick State Forest predates Article 97, the prison camp in Warwick was conceived and constructed **before** article 97 was passed by referendum on November 7, 1972. I spoke with the DCR's archivist, and he confirmed that the camp was planned and built in 1961-1964 (see attached article about the camp written in 1961).

The legal protections on state owned conservation lands are thus entirely different from what existed when the camp was built in the early 1960's. Because of how stringent Article 97 is, land owned by DCR is just as legally protected as land restricted by a just a CR.

I hope the above helps clarify and assuage some of the Town's concerns. If you or others on the Select Board have follow-up questions, please just let me know.

I have also cc'd our Deputy Commissioner for Policy and Public Affairs, Kendra Amaral as well as Mackenzie Greer, our Legislative and Partnership Coordinator for Central and Western MA. They have both been briefed on this matter.

Best,

Nick

Nick Rossi

Land Protection Specialist

Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation

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