

**Statement from Andrew J. Falender, Executive Director of the Appalachian Mountain Club, on the appointment of Stephen Burrington as Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation**

**Massachusetts State House, September 1, 2005**

I want to compliment the Governor in appointing Steve Burrington as DCR Commissioner. He has been a champion for the environment since his days at the Conservation Law Foundation and through his tenure at the Office of Commonwealth Development.

The Appalachian Mountain Club has had the pleasure of working closely with Steve on a plan he spearheaded to protect the lower flanks of Mt. Greylock, the state's highest mountain.

Steve spearheaded important programs such as the "greening" of the Department of Transportation, "Fix it First," and "Communities First". While at CLF, Steve was a key player in negotiating the Central Artery commitments.

Then there's the successful fight for the clean up of Salem Harbor and Boynton Point, and I'll never forget Steve's effort at CLF to set limits on Off Road Vehicles on Cape Cod.

As for the future, DCR has an ambitious agenda. Its website reads: "In the next two years we will create an agency capable of delivering world class conservation and recreation services, demonstrate progress toward world class parks, and generate public appreciation and support for the resources we manage."

We're lucky to have someone of Steve's energy, commitment and experience at the helm of DCR to take on this mandate. This will not be an easy job. The Department is facing a number of challenges that threaten the health and popularity of our state lands. Despite the Governor's and especially Doug Foy's strong support, funding for DCR has dropped by over a third since 2001. Although DCR's hardworking staff has been doing their best to make do with less, the Department simply needs more resources for management planning, maintenance, law enforcement and land acquisition to really reach its worthy goal of world-class parks.

But the momentum is positive. DCR is involved in a number of excellent initiatives that we know Steve will support and strengthen. Massachusetts recently became the first state in the nation to receive Forest Stewardship Council certification, the gold standard for sustainable forestry, on all its state forestlands. DCR created ecological reserves on public lands to protect our native wildlife and plant species. And, DCR is for the first time proposing to undertake comprehensive management planning on all our state lands.

We look forward to supporting Steve, building on DCR's successes, tackling its challenges, and working together to truly achieve DCR's vision of "world class parks" for the communities and environment of this great state.