## Introduction

The recreational management plan is intended to allow public use of the reservoir areas in a manner that is consistent with and will facilitate watershed protection efforts to ensure a safe, potable water supply. The objectives of the recreational management plan are to provide limited public access and use of HWW’s watershed resources, assist in identifying potential human activity threats to a supply source, determine whether the watershed can be shielded from those identified threats, and protect the water quality from future human activity threats.

Holyoke Water Works gives the highest priority to protecting their surface water sources and their associated watersheds in order to ensure the good quality of surface water it supplies to the City of Holyoke. The status of HWW’s surface water supply sources is summarized as follows:

1. Tighe-Carmody Reservoir (primary surface water supply source)

* Ashley Reservoir (consecutive water supply source that can be pumped into McLean Reservoir)

1. McLean Reservoir (secondary surface water supply source)
2. Whiting Street Reservoir (emergency surface water supply source)

The Recreational Management Plan focuses on the Tighe-Carmody Reservoir watershed (14.5 square mile drainage area), the Ashley Reservoir watershed (2.60 square mile drainage area), the McLean Reservoir watershed (0.47 square mile drainage area), and the Whiting Street Reservoir watershed (1.67 square mile drainage area).

Development of a Recreational Management Plan was considered a priority by HWW as a result of observing increased watershed usage by the community. The Holyoke Water Works Board of Water Commissioners was forced to restrict activities on the Water Works property in order to protect the watershed area. The "Water Works property" includes any reservoir, land, water supply, watershed, or any structure or building appurtenant thereto, owned by or under the care and control of the Holyoke Water Works. A Reservoir Use Ordinance, included in Appendix A, was developed by the Board and approved by the City Council in 1995.

## Recreational Management Plan Goals

The goals of the recreational management plan are summarized as follows:

1. Create a balance between protection of the watershed and allowance of public access such that the water quality of the surface sources is not jeopardized.
2. Maintain the high raw water quality of the surface sources to avoid the need for additional treatment, including filtration, as a result of not meeting the raw water requirements necessary to maintain the filtration waiver.
3. Improve public understanding of the need to protect the water sources.
4. Eliminate HWW’s liability for injuries that may occur during unauthorized activities on watershed property.
5. Maintain ultimate control over the watershed areas to ensure a safe, drinking water source.

## Program Description

The recreational management plan for HWW watershed property is summarized as follows:

1. Tighe-Carmody Reservoir/ The land and waterways are closed to the Manhan Dam public – No Trespassing.
2. McLean Reservoir The land and waterways are closed to the

public – No Trespassing.

1. Ashley Reservoir: No Trespassing from dusk to dawn.

Pedestrian traffic is allowed after dawn and before dusk only on paths and roadways specifically designated and marked by a black triangle symbol - . Pedestrian traffic shall include walking, jogging, running, and bicycling. All other activities are strictly prohibited.

1. Whiting Street Reservoir No Trespassing from dusk to dawn.

Pedestrian traffic is allowed after dawn and before dusk only on paths and roadways specifically designated and marked by a black triangle symbol - . Pedestrian traffic shall include walking, jogging, running, and bicycling. All other activities are strictly prohibited.

The language on the signage is included in Appendix B.

## Reservoir Use Ordinance

A Reservoir Use Ordinance, included in Appendix A, was developed by the Board and approved by the City Council in 1995. The ordinance applies only to the Ashley Reservoir and Whiting Street Reservoir watershed areas since public access is strictly prohibited in the Tighe-Carmody and McLean Reservoir watershed areas. The ordinance is summarized as follows:

**Walking/prohibited activities** - The Reservoir Use Ordinance allows pedestrian traffic on paths and roadways specifically designated and marked by the Board of Water Commissioners for such use. All other activities, including but not limited to the following, are **prohibited** on Water Works property:

• Walking dogs or any other domestic animal

• Horseback riding

• Use of motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles, snowmobiles, or any other forms of recreational vehicles

• Picnicking, bathing, swimming, wading in the water bodies, or launching/ operating boats or other watercraft

• Throwing or depositing dirt, rubbish, refuse, or any other matter

• Drawing or causing to be removed any water from any source

• Any act of drunkenness or inebriation, breach of peace, profanity, or other disorderly conduct offensive to the general public

• Possession of any alcoholic beverage or controlled substance

• Doing any activity, determined by HWW, which could injure, defile, deface, destroy, or pollute Water Works property

Many of these prohibited activities will negatively impact the natural resources and watershed areas. By jeopardizing the watershed area, the water quality of the surface water source is directly impacted. The ordinance allows patrolling personnel to issue fines for activities in violation of the Reservoir Use Ordinance.

**Special permitted activities** - The Reservoir Use Ordinance prohibits the following activities on Water Works Property without a **special permit** from the Board of Water Commissioners:

• Use of automobiles, trucks, and construction equipment

• Lotteries, parades, games, fairs, carnivals, or road races

• Solicitations for raising/collecting funds

• Commercial signs, notices, or other form of advertising displays

• Cutting, logging, or removing timber or woodland

The permitting process enables HWW to consider the group size, area of watershed for which the permit is sought, the activity, the potential threats to the watershed, and possible concurrent use with other groups. If the activity is determined to be non-compatible with the Watershed Resource Protection Plan or any other approved watershed protection plan and/or program, the Board of Water Commissioners reserves the right to deny the request. The Board will attempt to balance the permitted activities with the protection of the resource and rights of other users. A record of the requests, the decisions rendered, and justification for the decisions is maintained by HWW.

**Fines for violations** - Any person and, if applicable, the employer and all other persons concerned therein, violating the provisions shall be fined not more than fifty dollars ($50.00) for each offense. All fines shall inure to the use of, and be paid to the Holyoke Water Works. The fines will be issued by the patrolling officer and will be documented to ensure payment.

## Reservoir Use Signage

Signs in English and Spanish describing permitted and non-permitted activities are posted at all entranceways to HWW watershed property for the Tighe-Carmody, Ashley, McLean, and Whiting Street Reservoir watersheds. Refer to Appendix B for the language that is included on the signs. The presence of these signs assists in prosecuting violators of the Reservoir Use Ordinance.

The “No Trespassing” signs at the Tighe-Carmody and McLean Reservoir entranceways prohibit public access 24-hours a day. No activities are permitted on the watershed property. Any person found trespassing is subject to arrest and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

The “No Trespassing - Dusk To Dawn” signs at the Ashley and Whiting Street Reservoirs strictly prohibit activity after dusk to before dawn. Other activities will be permitted as defined in the Reservoir Use Ordinance. Pedestrian activities are restricted on Water Works property between one half hour before sunset to one half-hour after sunrise to curtail activities that may degrade the watershed and ultimately affect water quality. By restricting access to the watershed property from dusk to dawn via posted signs in English and Spanish, the potential threat for sanitary problems substantially decreases. As the total number of users of the watersheds increases, the potential for contamination by human viruses, *Giardia lamblia*, *Cryptosporidium*, and heterotrophic bacteria also increases. Due to a limited staff, patrolling the watershed property from dusk to dawn is not feasible. In addition, examples of observed night-time activities in the past have included igniting ground fires, alcohol consumption, and depositing refuse, all of which are prohibited activities on the watershed property. The restricted hours help to ensure the safety of the watershed area and the public domain.

Violators of the curfew will be fined up to fifty dollars ($50.00), payable to Holyoke Water Works.

## Parking Restrictions

Parking is prohibited in front of all reservoir gates. The intent of this restriction is to discourage use of the reservoirs and to keep gates open to emergency access to/from the reservoirs. For parking in a restricted zone, which is clearly identified, the violator's car will be towed at the expense of the owner, and the owner will be fined up to fifty dollars ($50.00).

## Additional Non-Permitted Activities

The following additional activities are prohibited within the Ashley and Whiting Street Reservoir watersheds -

• Sledding, hiking off marked trails, camping, open fires, fishing, hunting, target shooting (includes discharging of firearms as well as the use of bows and arrows), smoking

• Littering (including cigarette filters and/or "butts")

Although these activities are currently prohibited on the watershed property, the items are not specifically listed in the Reservoir Use Ordinance. These activities have the potential to degrade the watershed area, subsequently, affecting the water quality. Each activity's potential threat to the watershed area is summarized in Table 5-1.

By prohibiting these activities, HWW is protecting its valuable surface water sources and their associated watersheds.

## Best Management Practices/Implementation Schedule

Water quality impacts associated with recreational use of water supplies and water supply watersheds include microbial contamination from public usage, erosion and sedimentation problems associated with various forms of public activity, and gasoline and oil contamination from recreational vehicles. Access to the watersheds should be carefully controlled, giving consideration to the ability of the watershed to withstand the recreational activity.

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| **TABLE 5-1**  **ADDITIONAL PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES IN WATERSHED AREA** | |
| **Activity** | **Potential Threat** |
| Sledding | Sledding is dangerous and could promote surface erosion. |
| Hiking from HWW marked trails | Due to the lack of sanitary facilities, hiking may increase the potential for waterborne diseases and increased nutrient levels in the water. |
| Camping | Camping is often associated with open fires, sanitary problems, and litter problems. |
| Open fires | Careless use of fires may result in wild fires, damaging the resources of the watershed. |
| Fishing | Fishing disrupts the vegetative cover around the reservoirs and encourages reservoir usage. |
| Hunting (including trapping) | Hunting may result in adverse impacts on water quality and wildlife. |
| Target Shooting | This activity disturbs the natural wildlife in the watershed area, and has a high liability associated with accidents. |
| Smoking | Smoking is often the cause of ground/brush fires, is a littering concern, and does not enhance the natural beauty of the watershed. |

HWW has implemented the following BMPs for its recreational management plan:

1. Prohibit any use and access to the reservoir watersheds – HWW has prohibited trespassing at the Tighe-Carmody (primary source) and McLean Reservoir (location of the disinfection/corrosion control facility) watersheds.
2. Limit usage – HWW has limited permissible activities at the Ashley and Whiting Street Reservoirs. Any activity that may negatively impact the water quality of the surface source or the watershed is prohibited, as stated in the Reservoir Use Ordinance as well as the entranceway signs.
3. Prohibition zones – HWW has prohibited public access to critical areas, especially around the treatment facility in the McLean watershed.
4. Public education - The public must understand and appreciate the objectives of a watershed protection program. Public awareness helps in the acceptability of mandatory controls and prohibitions. Refer to HWW public awareness program in Section 10.
5. Signage - By allowing certain activities on HWW property, it is critical to clearly display, via signs, prohibited activities that may threaten water quality. HWW has posted signs at the entranceways to each reservoir.
6. Enforcement - Patrolling programs through HWW personnel, Holyoke Police Department, and Department of Environmental Management personnel assist in enforcing the Reservoir Use Ordinance. Policing and the issuance of fines for violators for non-permitted activities assure adequate protection of the watershed area.

The implementation schedule for the recreational management plan is summarized as follows:

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| **Action Item** | **Implementation Schedule** |
| Prohibit trespassing at the Tighe- Carmody and McLean Reservoir | Currently established; posted on entranceway signs |
| Limit activities at Ashley and Whiting Street Reservoirs | Currently established; listed many common prohibited activities on signs at entranceways of Ashley and Whiting Street Reservoirs. |
| HWW Public Awareness Program | Ongoing – HWW annually mails water system reports, including information on watershed protection, to its customers. |
| Signage | Posted at entranceways and along marked trails. Additional signage should be posted for Whiting Street Reservoir watershed. |
| Patrol Efforts | On-going by HWW, Holyoke Police Department and Department of Environmental Management personnel |