



## The Republican.

### Old report cited to protect trees

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AGAWAM - A 17-year-old state report cited by activists as a reason to stop planned logging at Robinson State Park highlights a variety of reasons to care for the 852-acre park, but also calls for a "judicious tree-cutting program" involving commercial logging to promote forest health.

The report, "Robinson State Park: Guidelines for Operations and Land Stewardship," was prepared by state officials in November 1989. In it, a variety of obstacles to caring for the forest are noted, with recommendations made on how to keep the forest's broad array of plants and animals flourishing.

Though a project with the scope of the plan unveiled by state officials this year is not suggested, the report states that both "commercial logging and noncommercial tree-cutting should be employed under a sound management plan to optimize conditions for wildlife."

The report also suggests that oak and other hardwood stands - trees activists in the group Friends of Robinson State Park have strongly opposed cutting - were on the chopping block even then.

"The oak-hardwood forest stands in the eastern half of the park should receive thinnings and timber stand improvement work, as many stands in the west half of the park were treated in the last decade," the report states.

"Commercial fuelwood sales are the preferred means of accomplishing this work, but park labor should be used in visually sensitive areas," it said.

The park, located along the Westfield River, is slated for logging later this year, with an estimated 2,700 trees on 133 acres scheduled to be removed. The planned cutting is split into two areas off James Street and the park's main gate on North Street, both located in the park's eastern half.

Attempts to reach several members of the Friends group yesterday were unsuccessful, but some members of the group have said they are opposed to any of the park's trees' being removed. State officials have said the trees' removal will promote age diversity in the forest.

Bids solicited by the state Department of Environmental Conservation and Recreation to log the park were due on Thursday. David A. Richard, management forester in charge of the project, could not be reached for comment yesterday.

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