

Massachusetts State Forests and Parks Open the Outdoors

by Marcy Marchello, DEM

If you live in Massachusetts or plan to travel here this year, you will be happy to know that many diverse recreation opportunities are available to visitors of all abilities - most of which are inexpensive or free of charge!

Massachusetts boasts over 100 state forests and parks. As the 6th smallest state in the United States, it has the 9th largest state park system, operated by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management (DEM). Opportunities abound to explore and enjoy ocean beaches, urban heritage parks, bicycle paths, rivers, historical sites, waterfalls, mountaintops, and more. Park interpreters provide educational tours about the natural and cultural history of the state where the pilgrims first landed, often in accessible areas and with the use of assisted listening devices for those who need enhanced hearing.

Universal Access Program

Accessible features like this are one of many ways that DEM's Universal Access Program has become one of the most progressive state park systems for initiating program and recreation accessibility.

The DEM's Universal Access

Program, with 5 fulltime staff and several seasonal staff, is dedicated to making sure that accessibility for people with disabilities is a priority in the Massachusetts state park system. As a program coordinator for the Universal Access Program in the last 5 years, I have delivered beach wheelchairs to numerous inland and ocean beaches, taught people how to cross country sitski and use handcycles, helped create adaptive rowing and paddling programs, taught park staff how to use integrative techniques in their tours and programs, recorded information and tours for blind visitors, and facilitated many outdoor events. Nearly every recreation activity that people come to state parks to do can be enjoyed by everyone - all abilities welcome!

Summer

For summer water-based activities, join us at the beach or pool or on the water! Visit Horseneck Beach State Reservation in Westport near Cape Cod, Salisbury Beach State Reservation north of Boston, or any one of 20 other beaches around the state where we provide beach wheelchairs. All of DEM's 20 state pools feature pool lifts

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Project Outreach

To enhance their ability to reach all persons in need of their services and in an effort to tailor their programs for all members of the community, the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC), Statewide Employment Services Department (SES) is presenting a new program called "Project Outreach." The purpose of this department is to recognize ways to improve services to people with severe disabilities who are underserved or unserved by MRC. There is more public awareness of some forms of disability than of others. The Americans with Disabilities Act has raised the understanding of the sorts of accommodations required by persons with needs for physical access. However, many other disabilities are less understood. These include, for example, people with Cerebral Palsy, Tourettes Syndrome, Autism, and the deaf and hard of hearing. These "low incidence"

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INSIDE

FROM THE CENTER

RESOURCES

FROM OUR READERS

Summer 2000

Arch and I are happy to have this "summer" issue of the Information Center's newsletter on its way to you. We realize, as fall approaches that we are more mindful of the opportunities and responsibilities that await, which we want to accept, in order to fulfill our mission, namely, "to provide information to individuals living with disabilities designed to assist them in their day-to-day activities; and to assist them to acquire knowledge which will (a) promote their social, economic, and general well-being, (b) foster independence and self-sufficiency and/or (c) afford them an opportunity to lead more satisfying lives. (part of the Articles of Organization of the Information Center for Individuals with Disability.)

When those words were written twenty three years ago it was a much different world for people with disabilities. Our children were not welcome in the public schools, no laws protected our right to work and to live on our own. Stores, restaurants, and public buildings were not accessible not to mention parks and beaches. People with disabilities were all but invisible in entertainment and the workplace. There were very few power wheelchairs and even the term assistive technology had not yet been invented. The Center was born because there was no organized way to obtain empowering information.

There has been so much progress over these years. Many more opportunities exist for individuals living with disability to experience a rich life today. This change has come about because of an increase in understanding and acceptance by our society, the development of sophisticated medical and rehabilitation care and technology, education, financial assistance, and improved architectural access. But most of all, it has come from the hard work and persistence of people with disabilities who refused to accept the way it was and demanded the full rights of American citizenship and human dignity. Much has been won and much has begun to be taken for granted. We must all understand that it is not enough to win rights and opportunities, we must guard and expand them every day.

In this time of national decision, the first election of a new millennium, we must be alert to change. It is your and our responsibility to maintain what has been achieved, to take care of what has been built, and not allow rejection of what has been accepted. Consider the candidates for office who accept our rights, and appreciate our abilities; let them know your views and then **be sure to vote**. By being responsible and vigilant, we can assure that the progress of the past continues into the future.

Disability Issues [ISSN 1063-9373] is a publication of the Information Center for Individuals with Disabilities, Inc., a 501(c) 3 nonprofit agency that provides information, referral, and problem-solving assistance on disability issues. The publication and distribution of *Disability Issues* is made possible only through the financial support of many individuals and organizations. Mention of a product or service in this newsletter does not constitute endorsement.

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President: Nancy C. Schock

Editor: J. Archer O'Reilly III

Conference for Parents and Professionals

On October 6, 2000 the Massachusetts Hospital School will present a conference entitled ***Children with Disabilities - Common Problems and New Solutions***. This conference is addressed to parents and professionals interested in learning more about up to date information, equipment and management strategies for children with disabilities.

The keynote address entitled *Sexuality in Adolescents with Disabilities* will be presented by Dr. Marianne Felice.

Workshops that will be included in the program include: Transition Planning, Pain Management, Nutrition, Opportunities in Community Recreation, Wound Care, Management of Spasticity, Management of Constipation, and Traumatic Brain Injury in Pediatrics.

The conference is open to everyone. Continuing Education credits will be awarded to physicians, nurses, nurse practitioners, social workers, therapists and teachers.

For more information or to be included on the conference mailing list, contact Betty Gould, Medical Staff Office, Massachusetts Hospital School, 3 Randolph Street, Canton, MA 02021, or phone 781-830-8402.

You may now receive *Disability Issues* via e-mail.

Send us your e-mail address and we will send you an electronic version of *Disability Issues* as each edition is published. See our web site at www.disability.net.

Recommended Reading

As readers of *Disability Issues* you are likely to be interested in other disability related publications and you may not have access to all those that may prove to be useful to you.

Therefore, the following article will recommend some of the magazines about disability related matters which the staff of the Information Center has found interesting and informative. This is by no means a complete list of publications about disability nor does it mean to imply anything about any magazine not listed here. Indeed, you may know of valuable publications that we do not know about. If so, please write and tell us and, if possible, send us a sample copy.

General

The following address issues across disabilities and contain information of general interest to people living with a broad range of situations.

WE Magazine - the print magazine associated with the ambitious disability web site **WeMedia.com**, it covers topics related to all disabilities and many events of daily living. The content lists of back issues are very diverse and **WE** appears to be the most general of the disability publications of which we are aware. As with many general-market magazines, they seem to have more stories about "celebrities" with disabilities such as Michael J. Fox. However, a publication which treats disability as mainstream and as a "real" market has its appeal.

Published bi-monthly by WeMedia, Inc., **WE** can be ordered for \$12.95/year by calling 1-800-936-2426 or write to: We Magazine, 130 William

Street, New York, NY 10038. It appears to be easiest to order a subscription on-line at their web site **www.wemagazine.com**.

abilities - a Canadian publication which describes itself as a "lifestyle magazine for people with disabilities" and covers a number of issues affecting people with many different types of disability. It contains a diverse assortment of advertisers. Its departments include: For Your Information, Lifestyle, Health, Sports, Issues, and Features.

Published quarterly by Canadian Abilities Foundation, **abilities** may be ordered for \$26/year (Canadian) by calling 1-888-700-4476 or write to: Canadian Abilities Foundation, 489 College Street, Suite 501, Toronto, ON M6G 1A5. Their web site is **www.abilities.ca**.

Physical Disabilities & Mobility

The following define their target audience as primarily persons with physical disabilities and mobility concerns. They each have a wide range of topics addressing the interests of this group.

accent on living - a small format magazine considered by many to be the grandfather of disability publications, **accent** is a trove of mobility related advertising, articles, notices, and stories. It sometimes includes information on other than mobility related topics. It regularly contains articles by persons with disabilities detailing their

personal experiences. Departments include: Headliners (*profiles of interesting community members*), Thumbs Up/Down (*travel*), News, New Products, and Features.

Published quarterly by Cheever Publishing, Inc., **accent on living** may be ordered for \$12/year by calling 1-800-787-8444 or write to: accent, P.O. Box 700, Bloomington, IL 61702. Their web site is **www.accentonliving.com**.

New Mobility - a big thick magazine with much mobility related advertising, it subtitles itself "disability culture & lifestyle." Its special issues are veritable resource directories, well organized and comprehensive. The most recent issue is a "Consumer Guide" with sections on Adaptation, Tools, Technology; Health and Hygiene; Fitness and Sports; Mobility and Seating; Services; Automotive; and Supplier Listings. This issue will have a long shelf life anywhere people turn for disability information.

New Mobility is published monthly by No Limits Communications, Inc. and may be ordered for \$27.95/year by calling 1-888-850-0344 or write to: New Mobility/ No Limits, P.O. Box 220, Horsham, PA 19044. Their web site is **www.newmobility.com**.

SCI Life - the magazine of the National Spinal Cord Injury Association, is dedicated to the presentation of news and helping information concerning people with spinal cord injuries. While in some ways this is the house organ of the NSCIA, it also contains well written political and medical updates, first person accounts, and resource information.

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Innovation in Air Travel

Delta Air Lines and the Theradyne Division of Kurt Manufacturing introduced the first-ever hydraulic lift carry-on chair to be used to transport passengers with disabilities onto aircraft. It is being called the Delta Air Chair. It will help improve the customer experience by providing a more comfortable transfer into aircraft seats that may not have a moveable aisle armrest.

"The Delta Air Chair should go a long way toward reducing the incidence of injury to special needs passengers as well as increasing their comfort level," said Nancy Starnes, director of the Paralysis Society of America and member of Delta's Customer Advisory Board. "Innovations such as the Delta Air Chair illustrate Delta's commitment to the increasing diversity of the traveling public."

The Delta Air chair features a patent pending hydraulic lift system that elevates a passenger to the height of the handrail so the airline employee can easily pass him/her over the armrest and lower her/him into their seat. Currently this is done manually by the gate agents. The new hydraulic technology promises to protect both passengers and airline employees from injury and to make the travel experience more comfortable for special needs passengers.

Delta and Kurt Manufacturing have worked very closely to develop and test the chair. Delta employees in Orlando created the concept and partnered with Theradyne to develop the first prototype. Kurt engineers used technology from one of their

existing products, a hydraulic wheelchair, to create prototype I. It was tested in Orlando for a six-month period on Delta Express, Delta's low-fare airline.

Prototype I was deemed an outstanding success, and Kurt used customer and employee feedback from the initial test to modify the original design and create the current prototype II. Now, prototype II has entered the second and final testing phase, a 60-day test of more than 30 chairs in 16 of Delta's airport operations throughout the United States. These airports include Atlanta, Boston, Cincinnati, Dallas/Ft. Worth, Ft. Lauderdale, Los Angeles, New York (JFK & LaGuardia), Las Vegas, Orlando, Phoenix/Scottsdale, Portland, Salt Lake City, Tampa, Washington, DC (Reagan), and West Palm Beach.

Once the test is completed, Delta will analyze the results and determine whether or not the chair will benefit customers and employees throughout its global operations. If so, Delta and other airlines would have the opportunity to purchase and/or lease this innovative new product.

[Ed. *If you have used this "Air Chair", you should be sure to let Delta know your reaction.*]

In 1999, Delta established a customer advocacy strategy to proactively design programs for customers with disabilities and other special needs. Since then they have:

- Formed a Customer Advisory Board consisting of representatives from national disability organizations to help the company define policies and procedures that better accommodate persons with disabilities.
- Supplied detailed information about accessibility services on their web site, www.delta-air.com, and via brochures in regular and large print as well as Braille.

Toll-Free Resource Guide

In the tradition of people gathering useful information and then offering to share it with others it may help, the same motivation that gave birth to the Information Center, a new book has been made available that contains 503 toll-free telephone numbers for medical, health, healing, and human service information. Compiled and printed by Debra Snyder Lipsky, *The National Toll-Free Resource Guide* lists the toll-free telephone numbers for a large and diverse assortment of information-providing organizations all across America. It is intended to be a handy reference tool to use if you or anyone you know has a crisis. The author has also included a section containing suggestions on how to use the *Guide* and the resources it contains.

This book is a valuable resource for any group or organization that needs to access helping information for anyone facing questions about health and human services, particularly people living with disability.

The *Guide* is available for \$7.00 per copy from Debra Snyder Lipsky, P.O. Box 90, Sharon, MA 02067. A charge of \$3.50 for shipping and handling covers orders of 1 to 5 books.

Open Outdoors

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which can be independently operated.

On the Water

Gliding on the water by boat is an exceptional way to access the natural landscape. Our adaptive rowing program provides exercise and the opportunity to get on two of New England's well known rivers, the Merrimac and the Connecticut. DEM's adaptive paddling program enables beginning or experienced paddlers to enjoy various ponds, lakes, and rivers by flatwater kayak or canoe at no charge. Kayak programs are based at Hopkinton State Park outside of Boston, and DAR State Forest in Goshen. Canoeing is based at Wells State Park in Sturbridge. The paddling program also travels during the summer months to appear in various parks around the Commonwealth for day programs in diverse settings.

Programs are run by experienced outdoor leaders trained in making adaptations for people with disabilities and assisted by lifeguards and volunteer staff.

On the Land

If you're looking for a beautiful place to spend the day outdoors on land, I recommend several parks where most if not all activities are now universally accessible. In the Berkshires, drive to the top of Mt. Greylock, Massachusetts's highest peak at over 3,000 feet, or enjoy a stroll through the forest at Pittsfield State Forest's Tranquility Trail. The DAR State Forest offers accessible camping, swimming, fishing, trails, adaptive kayaking, nature programs, and an accessible wetland viewing blind.

Dunn Park, in centrally located Gardner, is a favorite day use site offering picnicking, swimming, a woodland trail, fishing pier, and a hand cranked paddleboat. Rent handcycles and ride the Norwottuck Rail Trail near Northampton. You can also handcycle on the Cape Cod Rail Trail in one of America's favorite vacation spots. Closer to Boston, stroll the waterfront in Lynn and learn about the city's shoemaking industry or enjoy 3 miles of carriage trails at Borderland State Park in Sharon.

Winter

Now there is really no excuse to stay indoors all winter! An accessible cross country ski program provides equipment, support, instruction, and the opportunity to explore snowy woods and frozen bodies of water in western Massachusetts. Your family and friends can sit or stand ski along with you, learning assistive techniques that will enable you to return and use the equipment again if you so desire.

Even ice skating has become an accessible activity, indoors at DEM owned and privately managed skating rinks where a nominal rental fee is charged, and outdoors at selected parks as conditions permit. Skating is accomplished by using a seated ice skate, known as an ice sled or sledge. Skaters use shortened hockey sticks with picks on the end to propel themselves forward, chase pucks across the ice, and converse with icefisherman.

Bring the Family

One of the best things about state parks is the inexpensive opportunities they provide for families to recreate together. DEM's Universal Access Program enables families who have one or more members with disabilities to be able to share good times together. In my 5 years at DEM, I have witnessed more than one family that was able to recreate together for the very first time - needless to say a thrilling experience for all involved.

Two of my fondest memories of families enjoying the outdoors are a paraplegic father on an ice sled towing his able-bodied children on ice sleds behind him on a sunny winter's day, and a family of four and their service dog all aboard a hand cranked paddle boat being paddled by the kids. Such opportunities are not to be missed and rarely forgotten!

Special Events

The DEM's Universal Access Program also hosts accessible recreation events. These are typically a free-of-charge open-house style occasion, in which individuals, families, and groups spend a day at a selected park enjoying a variety of activities. Summer events include kayaking, canoeing, rowing, nature walks, and handcycling. Winter events include sitskiing and ice skating and sometimes snowmobiling and ice fishing.

Our annual Accessible Rail Trail Event in May brings together adapted bicycles and wheeled equipment of all kinds for people to try. These events are usually attended by a small group of vendors who provide additional demonstration equipment that is not included in the Universal

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Another Access Challenge

By now most Americans know what accessibility means for wheelchair users, for people with deafness, and vision impairment. However, what does access mean to persons with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity and other environmental disabilities? In the interest of shining a little light on this subject, we print the following excerpts from a proposed letter to the Architectural Access Board in Washington. This letter is a combined effort of a group of MCS activists including Sharon Wachsler.

There are many barriers that are easily addressed in your guidelines that have a profound impact on the daily lives of people with my disability/ies. [MCS, autoimmune disorder, asthma, cancer, other hidden disability.] Please set standards that would take into consideration the following suggestions.

1. Make all public buildings and transit safer and more accessible by implementing the following:

a. Reduce/eliminate exposures to superfluous toxic chemicals in building materials for the built environment. Use low-emitting volatile organic compound (VOC) products such as paints, carpets, adhesives, wall-covering, vehicle seats, et al for rehab/remodelling and new construction. Set standards for their use just as standards are set for carpet pile depth and density for mobility access.

b. Remove fragrance emission devices/systems (FEDS) and all perfume/deodorizers from restrooms and heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems in buildings and vehicles.

c. Install communication devices outside at wheelchair accessible entrances, and other likely entrances, in a sheltered, exhaust and smoke free area which is not chemically treated for pests. We need to announce our arrival at a facility, ask for assistance outdoors, or directions to the safest nearby area within the structure from a safe area.

d. Require permanent signage boards on which notices can be posted advising staff and public what is required to maintain safety in a designated area. Also temporary signage warning us if the guidelines have been compromised for the chemically sensitive such as when waxing, cleaning, painting, or pest control applications have occurred.

e. Increase ventilation of parking garages, increase number of handicap slots near exits accessible to people affected by chemical or electromagnetic sensitivity.

f. Landscape and build according to established practices that eliminate the need for maintenance with chemical pesticides, insecticides, and fungicides.

g. Utilize ceramic tile and other safe materials; use mold-resistant materials around plumbing and HUAV systems (naturally resistant as opposed to pre-treated with fungicide); install only ventilating systems made of solid metal without insulation lining and capable of being easily cleaned; set standards for placement of exhaust vents and air intakes so foul air isn't drawn into the building.

2. Create an accessible path of travel for people with chemical or electromagnetic sensitivity in healthcare facilities, government agencies, and other entities serving the public. The "Path of Travel" means that a person with a disability must be able to get from transportation through a door into the facility, get to the

desired destination within the facility, go to the toilet, make a phone call, and get a drink of water safely.

a. Path to the door:

1. No herbicide, pesticide, or chemical fertilizer used along the environmentally accessible path or on adjacent lawns, plants, etc.

c. Environmentally Accessible Room would have as many of these characteristics as possible:

1. no carpet;

2. cleaning and maintenance with non-toxic products;

3. a wall switch giving the occupant control of the lighting and ventilation;

4. a buzzer, intercom, or housephone to alert the receptionist or security that we are there and ready for our appointment;

5. no mandatory fluorescents (if there, let us turn them off);

6. no FEDS in the room or along path of travel;

7. no chemical insecticides or plantings that can only be maintained using herbicide;

8. located on the ground floor if possible;

9. not located directly over the transformers or generators for the building;

10. Permanent signage indicating that the room is used by chemically sensitive people and that there is no smoking or use of fragranced or toxic personal care or cleaning products in the room at any time.

Sharon Wachsler is a former employee of the Information Center, Housing Chairperson for the Environmental Health Coalition of Western Massachusetts, and Editor of the newsletter The Clarion. If you are interested in these issues, you may contact her at SWachsler@aol.com.

Recommended Reading

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Published quarterly by the NSCIA, **SCI Life** is a benefit of membership which may be obtained by calling 1-800-962-9629 or by writing to NSCIA, 8701 Georgia Avenue, Ste. 500, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Individual annual memberships begin at \$25. Their web site is **www.spinalcord.org**.

Children

Exceptional Parent - a magazine for parents of children with special needs, it covers a broad range of topics and provides a wealth of information about empowering the lives of your children with disabilities. It's special issues form a comprehensive resource directory for dealing with the special needs of children. It is particularly strong on education and assistive technology. After thirty years of publication, **Exceptional Parent** is an indispensable asset for this community and is strongly recommended by the Information Center. Well before the

days of the internet, this magazine was an open forum for parents to ask questions and share solutions with others facing the same challenges. It continues to serve that function today.

Published monthly by Psy-Ed Corp. **Exceptional Parent** may be ordered for \$36/year by calling 1-877-372-7368 or write to: Exceptional Parent, P.O. Box 2078, Marion, OH 43306-2178. The **Annual Resource Guide** included in the cost of a subscription. Their web site is **www.eparent.com**.

Ed. By way of disclosure, **Exceptional Parent** was co-founded by Stanley Klein, PhD who was a long time member of the board of trustees of the Information Center.

Travel

The Center has printed many articles on traveling with a disability over the years and understands that the interest in, and opportunities for travel are constantly increasing. We recommend this publication for anyone who plans to travel regularly.

Open World - is a publication of the Society for the Advancement of Travelers with Handi-

caps (SATH) which is associated with the American Society of Travel Agents. This organization sponsors regular trade shows on travelers with disabilities and has done much to increase awareness and accommodation in the travel industry. This magazine is, in part, targeted to the travel agents with whom they work. However, it contains many stories about traveling with a disability, promotions from travel destinations, and travel advertising. If you are a traveler, this one is for you.

Published quarterly by SATH Publications, Inc., **Open World** may be ordered for \$13/year by calling 212-447-1928 or write to: SATH Publications, Open World, 347 Fifth Avenue, Suite 610, New York, NY 10016. Their web site is **www.sath.org**.

*(The feature article in this issue on state parks grew out of an article in **Open World** last year on the same subject.)*

Note: The Information Center would appreciate recommendations and sample copies of publications of special or general interest to people living with disability. Please send them to: Information Center, P.O. Box 750119, Arlington Heights, MA 02475.

Subscriptions to **Disability Issues** are available to all who find this publication useful and interesting. There is no fee, however, contributions to help defray the cost ensure the future of our efforts. Your tax-deductible donation, in whatever amount you can manage, will be greatly appreciated, and put to good use.

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Project Outreach

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populations deserve the opportunity to exercise their right to choose, obtain, and retain meaningful community based employment and receive long term supports as needed and to be paid in accordance with their skills and abilities.

Project Outreach is designed to reach those who have not traditionally been accommodated, to promote awareness and empowerment of people with severe disabilities, and to assist them in fulfilling their employment and independent living goals. This includes promoting choice among; supported employment, competitive employment, living alone, living with PCA assistance, group homes, or other appropriate solutions.

A task force consisting of MRC consumers, counselors, representatives of United Cerebral Palsy, and assistive technology experts has been created to support the project. Funding for Project

Outreach comes from MRC's SES Department and the Consumer Involvement Department of the Independent Living Division.

Project Outreach seeks to assist individuals looking for information for themselves, a family member or friend who may need help with their living or working situation; employers interested in capable and productive workers; and professionals wanting to learn more about the barriers facing individuals with "low incidence" disabilities.

For more information about Project Outreach, or to offer your suggestions on innovative ways to serve particular populations, you may contact the project's coordinator, Kimberly Downing. Ms. Downing is hard of hearing so choose one of the following ways to contact her. TTY at 617-204-3701, e-mail: **Kimberly.Downing@MRC.ma.us**; or mail at Kimberly Downing, Project Outreach, MRC, 27 Wormwood Street, Suite 600, Boston, MA 02210

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Access Program's regular inventory, along with expertise and products that enrich everyone's experience.

More interested in Massachusetts State Parks now? Please contact us! Call or write for a Universal Access brochure, newsletter/calendar, and other state park information to aid in your planning. We welcome questions and feedback about any park or facility as well.

Visit our website at **www.state.ma.us/dem/access**. Information is available in Braille, large print, and on audio cassette. Contact DEM's Universal Access Program at PO Box 484, Amherst, MA 01004, or call 413-545-5353. Individual and group inquiries welcome!

Marcy Marchello is a statewide program coordinator for the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management's Universal Access Program.