

# The Boston Globe

## State starts hiring process to clean, maintain beaches

By Peter J. Howe, Globe Staff | December 8, 2007

Following through on a key improvement urged by a special commission on Boston Harbor beaches, the state's parks agency late yesterday began the process of hiring 64 additional employees to clean and maintain ocean and inland beaches next year.

The new staff will include four to six "beach coordinators," who will be responsible for clusters of ocean beaches. Like small-city mayors, they're expected to serve as a single point of contact for beach residents, local officials, and parks supporter organizations, who want to hold an official responsible for keeping beaches clean, safe, and programmed with activities like concerts, sand-castle-building, volleyball contests, and kite-flying festivals.

"The beaches will become their responsibility, and it will be like they are welcoming you into their home," said Richard K. Sullivan Jr., commissioner of the Department of Conservation and Recreation. "If you can instill that pride of ownership, it's just going to have a huge impact on the quality of experience that people have when they go there. They're going to be the face of DCR and the face of the beach, someone who is going to have the responsibility year round to be working with the public and working with the friends groups and municipalities the beaches are located in."

Increased staffing for the chronically short-staffed agency, and the beach coordinators in particular, were among the major recommendations of the Metropolitan Beaches Commission, formed by the Legislature in late 2005. Commission cochairman Jack Hart, a Democratic state senator from South Boston, and cochairwoman Kathi-Anne Reinstein, a Democratic state representative from Revere, urged that the state follow through on improving the 14 metropolitan ocean beaches after spending \$4 billion since the late 1980s cleaning up Boston Harbor to make much of the shoreline safe for swimming for the first time in decades.

Sullivan said the agency will spend \$2.4 million, approved by legislators earlier this year, on the increased staffing, as well as \$1 million by next spring on maintenance gear for saltwater beaches in the Boston area.

That includes two tractor-pulled beach cleaning machines called sanitizers, 20 solar-powered compacting trash cans, and dozens of new trash barrels and dispensers for dog-waste collection bags.

All 64 jobs are year-round positions, Sullivan said. They include laborers, maintenance equipment operators and mechanics, coastal ecologists,

visitor services supervisors, recreation facilities repairers, beach program managers, horticulturalists, and rangers. Some are subject to civil service hiring procedures.

The state began advertising them last night on the DCR website, [www.mass.gov/dcr/employment.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dcr/employment.htm). People seeking information can also call 617-626-1415 beginning this morning.

"This infusion of new staff and equipment has long been needed, is much anticipated, and will make a huge difference in the beach-going experience of the more than 1 million state residents who live within half an hour of one of our ocean beaches," said state Senator Anthony Petrucci, an East Boston Democrat who served on the commission. "I look forward to seeing the results of this investment."

This summer, Sullivan began having the agency publish public schedules to show how often it would rake beach sand, clean bathhouses and restrooms, and mow grass at beaches and parks as a way of allowing visitors to beaches and parks to hold agency staff accountable.

Besides the 14 beaches from Nahant to Hull, the parks agency operates about 10 other salt-water beaches and 40 inland fresh-water beaches at state parks and forests.

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