

# Massachusetts Forest Update

## April 2017

### **Tornado Forest Restoration Funding Application Period Ends May 3rd**

Landowners who want financial assistance with cleaning up tornado and wind damage to their woodlands and trees from the February tornado must apply for funding by May 3rd.

The Franklin County Farm Service Agency office is now accepting applications for Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP) funding to help woodland owners carry out emergency cleanup of trees and woodlands damaged by the February 25th tornado which struck Goshen, Ashfield and Conway. The EFRP program will pay up to \$2,000 per acre to help get damaged trees removed safely, depending upon the level of damage.

To be eligible for EFRP cost assistance, the woodland must be owned by a non-industrial private landowner and must have had tree cover prior to the storm. The woodland must have had damage that if untreated would impair the natural resources on the land or materially affect future use of the land. There is no minimum acreage requirement to be eligible.

The signup period for requesting EFRP assistance runs from April 3rd to May 3rd.

There will be an information meeting about getting approved for EFRP funding and the state permit requirements for cleanup operations at the Ashfield Town Hall on Thursday, April 13th at 6:30 pm.

For more information, call DCR forester Alison Wright-Hunter at 413 262-2370 or email [Alison.wright@state.ma.us](mailto:Alison.wright@state.ma.us) or call the Franklin County FSA office at 413 772-6810 x2.

To file an application for EFRP funding, landowners will need to apply in person at the FSA office at 55 Federal Street in Greenfield to identify their properties and the damaged areas on the maps.

### **Cross Laminated Timber Could be Profitable Product for New England Forests**

Cross Laminated Timbers (CLT) are the hottest innovation in wood products and building construction in decades. Often called "plywood on steroids", CLT panels custom built from multiple layers of planks laid at right angles and glued together under pressure, are being used in innovative tall buildings around the U.S. and the world, showing potential to make buildings more environmentally sustainable and more affordable than conventional concrete and steel structures, while using a lot more wood.

The recently completed Design Building at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst highlights the use and potential of custom built CLT construction.

Can these new innovations become a major market for wood grown and harvested in New England? Can local species be used to produce cross-laminated timbers? What would be needed to develop a CLT market and industry in New England?

Those are questions that researchers from the Finnish consulting firm Poyry Global investigated in a just-released new study about the potential for developing a cross-laminated timber market in the Northeast.

Poyry's Director Cormac O'Carroll provided a summary of the study's findings at a program at the Design Building on April 5th. O'Carroll said their study found that there was a large potential market for CLT panels in the Northeast creating an opening for a potential CLT manufacturer in New England. Based on experience in Europe and given the reduced labor costs of CLT construction, CLT might readily gain a one percent or greater share of the northeastern market for engineered wood products, particularly in the construction of mid height (3 to 8 story) apartment or office buildings. And, given the extensive forest cover in New England with large amounts of hemlock timber which can be adapted to build the panels, a new CLT manufacturer might create a new market for up to 20 million board feet of hemlock planks per year, providing a new market for local sawmills and landowners for an underutilized species.

A CLT production facility would cost up to \$20 million to build from scratch, O'Carroll said, but construction costs could be substantially reduced if an existing facility was adapted for the purpose. Cost and revenue estimates that Poyry developed show a realistic potential for a profitable CLT industry. A typical CLT plant would employ about 30 people to construct and machine the panels and support another 150 jobs in logging, sawmilling and trucking.

Important steps that need to be completed to allow CLT to grow here include revising building codes to allow wood construction in taller buildings, and ongoing research to determine how hemlock and other local species can be used in CLT panels.

Massachusetts Economic Development Secretary Jay Ash also spoke at the Amherst meeting, saying the state was interested in helping facilitate and finance a CLT manufacturer.

### **SWET Tours Show off Modern Wood Heat Installations in Berkshire and Worcester Counties**

The Massachusetts Statewide Wood Energy Team (SWET) held two very successful Modern Wood Heat tours in March, visiting five installations in Berkshire County and four others in Worcester County.

More than 50 people took part in the two day-long tours which showed different applications of modern wood systems using wood pellets, wood chips, or cordwood, varying in size and cost.

At the Berkshire County tour on March 15th, participants viewed systems ranging from the industrial size wood pellet boiler at MASS MOCA in North Adams that helps heat 22 buildings, the cordwood-fired boiler heating a classroom building at the Buxton School in Williamstown, the wood chip-fueled district heating system that heats eight buildings at Gould Farm in Monterey, and the two pellet boilers that heat the Southern Berkshire Regional School complex in Sheffield.

Participants also saw the pellet heating system and basement pellet storage at DCR's West Region headquarters in Pittsfield. Jon Parrott from the Department of Energy Resources gave a brief program discussing the different state programs that can help property owners convert to modern wood heat systems.

At the Worcester County tour on March 30th, participants saw a cordwood-fired system at Harvard Forest in Petersham, wood-chip fueled heating systems at Mount Wachusett Community College in Gardner and Narragansett Regional High School in Baldwinville, and a pellet-fired system at the Briggs Elementary School in Ashburnham.

At the noon break of the Worcester tour, Marc Caluwe from Caluwe, Inc., and Ben McDaniel, from the Center for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, gave short presentations about the use of combined heat and power systems to increase efficiency and accelerate payback of heating systems.

Case studies for the Berkshire and Worcester County wood heating systems and others can be found in the Modern Wood Heat portion of the Forest Alliance website at [www.massforestalliance.net/modern-wood-heat/case-studies](http://www.massforestalliance.net/modern-wood-heat/case-studies).

The Massachusetts SWET has been holding the Modern Wood Heat tours as part of its mission to identify and assist with opportunities to develop renewable wood heating at all scales: residential, municipal, institutional, and commercial, in Massachusetts. The SWET is funded by a grant from the US Forest Service and administered by MFA.

### **State Estate Tax is Hot Topic at Mass Ag Day at the Statehouse**

MFA was one of many agricultural organizations that took part in Mass Ag Day at the Statehouse in Boston on April 4th, talking with legislators and state officials about issues of concern to woodland owners and forest businesses. Executive Director Nathan L'Etoile, and members Dicken Crane, Matt Baron, and Jim Kelly represented MFA at the meetings and legislator visits.

Among the hot topics at this year's meetings was the state's estate tax which makes it difficult for many farmers to pass down their farms to the next generation. There have been many bills filed to change or repeal the estate tax for farmlands or woodlands.

If you or your family have had experience in dealing with the state estate tax in passing down your lands, we would like to hear from you to hear your experiences and how you would like to see it changed. Give Greg Cox a call at 413 339-5526 or email him at [gcox@massforestalliance.net](mailto:gcox@massforestalliance.net)

### **Chapter 61 Tax Values Follow Stumpage Prices Up in 2018 Tax Year**

Tax valuations for woodlands under Chapter 61 or 61A will rise 17 percent in the tax year that begins July 1st. The average woodland tax valuation will rise from \$75/acre to \$88/acre for woodlands west of the Connecticut River, and from \$53/acre to \$62/acre for woodlands east of the river. Highly productive woodlands west of the river would be valued at \$105/acre, with below average woodlands at \$70/acre. Highly productive woodlands east of the river would be valued at \$74/acre, with low productivity woodlands at \$50/acre.

The tax valuation for wetlands or unproductive land would remain at \$40/acre, while the valuation for Christmas tree plantations would stay at \$108/acre.

The valuation increases mean that total taxes under Chapter 61 or 61A for 50 acres of average woodlands west of the river in a town with a \$15 tax rate will rise from \$56 total to \$66 in fiscal 2018, while taxes on an average 50-acre woodland east of the river with a \$15 tax rate would rise from \$40 total to \$47.

The Chapter 61 and 61A valuations are set by the Farmland Valuation Advisory Commission under a formula that calculates the average stumpage values from timber sales in the past five years weighted by the relative abundance of the species, with a 30 percent discount to reflect that not all trees can be harvested. The rising valuations reflect the strong rise in stumpage prices in recent years compared with the depressed stumpage prices during the recession from 2008 to 2011.

The complete list of farmland values for fiscal 2018 can be found at:

<http://www.mass.gov/dor/docs/dls/bla/farmland/fy18/chaptervaluesfy2018.pdf>

### **Graduate Level Silviculture Workshops for Northeastern Foresters**

The North East State Foresters Association (NEFA) will be offering a Northeast Silviculture Institute for Foresters, a series of training workshops in graduate level silviculture, in 2017 and 2018.

Threats to forests in the northeast United States from fragmentation, invasive plants and insects, high-grading, climate change and shifts in wood utilization and manufacturing capacity have revealed gaps in the knowledge of working forest managers - especially in silviculture. Field foresters need updated and accurate information regarding new and

emerging forest science to assure their silvicultural decisions made are as informed as possible.

The NEFA workshops are designed to provide foresters with the appropriate knowledge to make sound, science-based decisions for forest ecosystem management, harvests and regeneration. The workshops are designed for the USDA Forest Service's National Advanced Silviculture Program (NASP) to provide landscape-specific materials for northeast forests.

The series of five workshops delivered in 2017 and again in 2018 will cover the following:

- NASP New England and Northern New York Overview (2 days)
- Northern Hardwood Forest Type (2 days)
- Mixed Oak Hickory Forest Type (2 days)
- Pine, Oak and Hemlock Forest Type (2 days)
- Spruce - Fir Forest Type (2 days)

While workshops will be limited to 50 participants, the workshop curriculums will be posted online to be available to all foresters in the region.

The first Overview workshop in the series will be held at the Craftsbury Outdoor Center in Craftsbury, VT on May 23 -24. Cost of the workshop is \$50 covering food, classroom materials and field trips. Lodging is extra. Application deadline for the May workshops is April 10th.

For more information about the series, or to apply for the May workshops, go to [www.northeastsilvicultureinstitute.org](http://www.northeastsilvicultureinstitute.org)

### **Upgrade Your Wood Stove Through the Wood Stove Change-out Program**

Got an older wood stove that you'd like to replace with a newer, cleaner, more efficient model? If you do, now's the time to check out the state's 2017 Wood Stove Change-out Program.

The Baker-Polito Administration has announced \$450,000 in funding for the 2017 Commonwealth Wood Stove Change-out Program to help homeowners replace older, more polluting wood stoves with cleaner burning, more efficient stoves.

Homeowners who buy new EPA-certified clean burning wood stoves through the program can get between \$500 and \$1,750 to help with the cost, and between \$1,500 and \$3,000 if they qualify as low-income. Either wood stoves or pellet stoves can qualify for the cost assistance, provided they meet the EPA standards.

Information about the Wood Stove Change-Out Program can be found online at [www.masscec.com/woodstove](http://www.masscec.com/woodstove). The Wood Stove Change-out Program is administered by the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center with assistance from the Department of

Environmental Protection and Department of Energy Resources. Since 2012, the program has helped homeowners replace 1,400 wood stoves statewide.

EPA-certified stoves require one-third less wood on average than older models to produce the same amount of heat, while releasing 70 to 90 percent less particulate matter, which has been shown to exacerbate health conditions like asthma, heart disease and lung cancer. Residents installing new stoves can expect to save an average of \$5,000 over the lifetime of the stove. Each woodstove switched out for a newer model is equivalent to eliminating the particulate emissions from five old diesel trucks. Visit [https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-11/documents/kit\\_2\\_fast\\_facts.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-11/documents/kit_2_fast_facts.pdf) .

While the majority of program participants purchase new woodstoves, over 40 percent opted for pellet stoves in 2016. In addition to burning very cleanly, these modern appliances automatically feed fuel into the fire, and many have built-in thermostats that allow owners to adjust the room temperature just as they can with central heating systems.

In this year's program, standard rebates will range from \$500 to \$1,750, depending on the emission levels and type of stove purchased. Rebates from \$1,500 to \$3,000 are available for residents who meet certain income requirements. For the first time this year, the program will provide higher incentives for stoves that achieve a superior efficiency level.

To qualify for a rebate, a resident must have an operational, non-EPA-certified woodstove. To apply, the resident should visit a participating woodstove retailer or contact a participating stove professional such as a chimney sweep, who will handle the rebate application process on the residents' behalf. Residents can find a local participating woodstove professional by viewing the list of registered woodstove dealers at <http://www.masscec.com/woodstove> . Rebate applications will be accepted until August 21, 2017.

### **Massachusetts SWET Publishes Modern Wood Heat Case Studies**

Want to know more about how different facilities have converted to modern wood heating systems? The Massachusetts SWET has put together a series of individual case studies of wood heat installations in Massachusetts, detailing type of wood heating system installed, costs, savings, and assistance received to complete the conversion.

The case studies can be found in the Modern Wood Heat section of the Forest Alliance website at [www.massforestalliance.net/modern-wood-heat/case-studies](http://www.massforestalliance.net/modern-wood-heat/case-studies) . Case studies are provided for small, medium and large applications, as well as by the different kind of wood fuels used.

### **Get Your Tree Farm Certification Up to Date**

If your Tree Farm is being recertified for Chapter 61 or 61A this year (or was recertified last year) now is the perfect time to get your Tree Farm certification renewed also.

To do that, send an email to Greg Cox at [gcox@crocker.com](mailto:gcox@crocker.com) and let him know which forester is doing (or did) your Chapter 61 recertification. Greg will send a recertification form for your Tree Farm to your forester who can fill it out and send it back and it will be complete.

### **Massachusetts Endangered Species List Updated**

The Massachusetts Endangered Species Act list of Rare and Endangered species was revised recently reflecting changes in local populations. Nine species, including sharp-shinned hawks and Henslow's sparrows were removed from the list, eight species had a change in status, and four species were added to the list. Changes to the MESA list are based on three primary criteria: species rarity, population trends, and threats to the species in Massachusetts.

Because the status of rare and vulnerable species can change due to many factors, the MESA list undergoes periodic review by MassWildlife scientists and outside experts. Any changes to the list are brought to the NHESP Advisory Committee and the Fisheries and Wildlife Board for approval.

To see a complete list of the changes, go to <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dfg/dfw/natural-heritage/species-information-and-conservation/mesa-list/recent-mesa-list-changes.html> .

### **Public Comment on Priority Habitat Maps Now Open**

The Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA) protects rare species and their habitats. Through MESA regulations, MassWildlife's Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) creates a Priority Habitat map, which represents the known habitat for rare species within the Commonwealth. The NHESP reviews projects and activities proposed within Priority Habitat to reduce impacts to MESA-listed species.

Priority Habitats are based on occurrences-within the last 25 years-of MESA-listed species. The Priority Habitat map has been recently updated. Changes to the MESA species list, an improved understanding of species biology and habitat requirements, and the use of improved mapping tools are also reflected.

A draft of the latest Priority Habitats will be available for a 60-day public comment period, starting April 3, 2017. Once the comment period ends and relevant revisions are made, the final Priority Habitat map will be available online.

Visit [mass.gov/dfw/nhesp/map-comment](http://mass.gov/dfw/nhesp/map-comment) for more information, including the draft maps.

## **Employment Opportunities Seasonal Forestry Assistant**

The Department of Conservation and Recreation seeks qualified applicants for the position of Seasonal Forestry Assistant. The individual assists in the preparation of plans for replanting trees on public and private property in the Gateway Cities, meets with homeowners to determine proper tree type(s) and location(s), interacts with private landowners to answer questions about replanting operations, assists in the supervision of daily planting operations by state forest crews to ensure trees are planted according to DCR Bureau of Forestry standards, assists Foresters with data collection and management to record locations of planted trees and periodically check their condition, and performs related duties such as maintaining records and attending staff meetings.

For more information or to apply, go to:

[src=JB-10080&https://massanf.taleo.net/careersection/ex/jobdetail.ftl?job=231900](https://massanf.taleo.net/careersection/ex/jobdetail.ftl?job=231900)

**MFA Forest Update: Now accepting ads, both graphic and text ! Contact MFA to learn more, or place your ad.**

## **Upcoming Events in April and May**

- April 8      Building Green with Wood - Teacher Seminar - Amherst
- April 11     Forest Fermentables - webinar
- April 13     Tornado Forest Restoration Information Meeting -- Ashfield
- April 13     Urban Trees and the Law -- webinar
- April 17     The New American Chestnut program - Boston
- April 22     Project Learning Tree workshops - Norwell
- April 23     Wildlife Habitat Woodland Tour - Mansfield, CT
- April 25-27   Northeast Biomass Heating Conf. & Expo.
- April 28     Arbor Day Celebrations
- April 29     Invasive Plant Tour & Workbee - Southbridge

May 9 Raising Wild Kids - webinar

May 10 Forester Licensing Board - Amherst

May 13 Forest Walk & Tree Farm Tour - Warren

May 19 - 20 Northeastern Forest Products Equipment Expo - Bangor, ME

May 23 - 24 Advanced Silviculture Workshop - Craftsbury Common, VT