

Massachusetts Forest Update August 2016

Member Support gets Working Forest Initiative Funding Restored

Thanks to quick action by MFA members and cooperating organizations, proposed cuts in funding for the Working Forest Initiative have been reversed in the state's capital budget for the fiscal year that began July 1st.

In June, despite strong support from the Department of Conservation and Recreation as well as the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, the proposed 2017 state capital budget included no funding for the Working Forest Initiative which includes the Forest Stewardship program and the Foresters for the Birds Initiative. The 2016 budget included \$500,000 for those programs.

MFA urged our members and other organizations to send letters to Environmental Secretary Matthew A. Beaton and other state officials urging that money be found to allow the two programs to continue to operate. MFA pointed out that the programs to date had substantially increased the amount of timber harvested under long-term management plans, supporting about 1,000 jobs in the forest community. The money also led to more than 125,000 more acres of woodlands being managed under long-term management plans, and leveraged substantial additional investment by participating landowners to carry out their plans, and encouraged many to consider long-term conservation of their woodlands.

The calls and letters of support from our members paid off. Secretary Beaton said in a July 20th letter to MFA that the widespread support for the program from diverse stakeholders helped state officials get \$500,000 put back into the capital budget to fund the program for the current fiscal year.

75th Anniversary Tree Farm Tour in Belchertown on August 31st

W.D. Cows, Inc. and the Massachusetts Tree Farm Program are hosting a Tree Farm tour at Cows' Great Hills Forest in Belchertown to commemorate the American Tree Farm System's 75th anniversary, and Cows' 275th anniversary on Wednesday, August 31st, from 5:15 pm to 7:15 pm.

Cows' forester, Jacob Macko, will lead the tour of the 300-acre Great Hills Forest to show recent even-aged oak and hardwood management. The tour will also examine recent gypsy moth defoliation, long-term forest management options, and the Best Management Practices Cows has used to protect streams and wetlands on the property.

To learn more, see www.massforestalliance.org

Legislative Update

With the wrap of formal sessions in the legislature, it's a great time to update our members on the status of many of our policy items. We had some victories, and while we didn't have any losses, we are still working on a few items. Member participation has been crucial on a couple of these items, and without your help, we couldn't have been so successful!

Working Forest Initiative Funding: FUNDING FULLY RESTORED *thanks to member efforts and support from DCR and EOECA (see article above).*

Zoning Reform: DEAD! *MFA opposed unrealistic and confiscatory zoning reform. The Zoning Reform bill has died for its 6th consecutive legislative session. Despite not supporting the effort, MFA successfully engaged with proponents to fix some of the most offensive provisions that mandated downzoning, eliminated ANR's, allowed the imposition of excessive impact fees and more. While this may return in the next legislative session, it is, for now, dead.*

Property Tax Changes: DEAD! *MFA opposed changes to Chapter 61 & 61A which would have given towns another 90 days to act on Right of First Refusals under those laws, forcing landowners to wait longer to sell their property. MFA got the proposed change voted down.*

Paper Bag Tax: DEAD! *MFA opposed a tax on paper bags. There was a proposal to tax all bags at retail shopping establishments. Paper bags were removed in the Senate proposal, and the entire proposal died in the House.*

Property Tax Filing Dates: FIXED! *Efforts to change the filing dates for 61A had originally included changes to the filing dates for Chapter 61 applications. MFA heard from its members that there was no issue with Chapter 61 filing dates, and changes would only complicate things. MFA assured that any such proposals no longer included Chapter 61 lands.*

Licensing Periods: ONGOING! *MFA supports legislation to extend forester and logger licensing to a 3 year time frame. Our proposals are currently tied up in posturing between the House and the Senate as they continue efforts to pass an Omnibus Agricultural Bill. The proposal will, when passed, lead to three-year licensing at the same cost as the current one-year license.*

Alternative Portfolio Standards Regulations: ONGOING! *The Department of Energy Regulations has collected all comments and is reviewing them for revisions to the proposed regulations. MFA has advocated for sensible and simple standards for certification of Renewable Thermal Energy Credits providing that the fuel is sustainable, for the regulations to embrace cordwood (not prohibit it as they do now)*

and to allow for green chips to be an eligible fuel source. Many MFA members answered our call to submit comments, and we are now awaiting a response.

Wetland Crossings: ONGOING! *MFA is working to improve the sustainability and reduce the environmental impact of the forestry regulations. MFA has met with DCR and is working on a way to improve the rules around wetland crossings - what is acceptable and how long they can be left in place.*

Contiguous Lands Definition: ONGOING! *MFA is working with other agricultural groups to change the definition of contiguous lands eligible for classification under Chapter 61A to go from the current standard (touching) to within a half mile of each other.*

Natural Heritage Determinations: ONGOING! *MFA is working with Mass Wildlife's Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program Staff and DCR to develop an alternative pathway to receive NHESP determinations on prospective harvesting operations prior to the filing of a cutting plan. This would allow valuable information to be included in the cutting plan upfront instead of being added afterwards by amendment. The determinations would be good for the full term of a cutting plan, plus up to two one-year extensions.*

Roadway Closures: STOPPED! *MFA opposed municipal road closures to log trucks. At the request of a member, MFA was able to work with a local community to prevent road postings in that town from requiring immensely burdensome insurance and inspection requirements. We also worked with the local county government organization to reword their suggested road posting language to local communities to exempt agricultural and forestry operations.*

Local Assessors: ONGOING! *MFA worked with many landowners and municipalities to make sure that the officials understood the proper rules and procedures for handling Chapter Land applications.*

Tree Farm Field Day in Ware on September 17th

The 2016 Massachusetts Tree Farm Field Day will be held at Byron & Nancy Stutzman's Flat Brook Forest Tree Farm on Old Poor Farm Road in Ware on September 17th from 9 am to 4 pm.

The Stutzman's 540 acre property includes a wide variety of habitats and forest types. A morning tour will show how they have managed the woodlands in recent years to remove lower quality trees to promote regeneration and diversify wildlife habitats. They have also done extensive work to reduce populations of invasive plants and clean up environmental damage from a prior owner.

To learn more, see www.massforestalliance.org

What is a SWET and Why is Important to Massachusetts Forests?

The Massachusetts Statewide Wood Energy Team (SWET) has been formed by MFA with the support of the US Forest Service to identify and assist in the evaluation and development of promising renewable wood energy opportunities at all scales: residential, municipal, institutional, and commercial. The US Forest Service created the national SWET Initiative to encourage the use of renewable wood energy to stimulate rural economic development, increase energy self-reliance, and, in some areas, to reduce the risk of wildfire. About 20 states currently participate in the SWET program.

The Massachusetts SWET promotes the use of modern, clean, and efficient wood energy technology to replace fossil fuel systems for heating buildings and businesses. Increasing the use of wood fuels for heat can reduce energy costs, create rural jobs, improve management of woodlands, and keep more fuel dollars in the local economy. Reducing the use of imported fossil fuels, such as heating oil and propane, can aid in the effort to reduce greenhouse gases from fuels that are not part of the natural carbon cycle.

To learn more, see www.massforestalliance.org

Meet Bryn Gingrich

Bryn is the newest member of the MFA team. Bryn joined MFA in June to work on communications and outreach for the SWET grant. Bryn is a recent graduate of Smith College with a degree in Environmental Science & Policy and Anthropology.

A few of her interests are spatial analysis, community green spaces, resource management...and forestry, of course. In her spare time, she enjoys gardening, acroyoga, and long walks in the woods.

Bryn can be reached at bgingrich@massforestalliance.net

Sean Mahoney is new DCR Utilization & Marketing Forester

DCR announced in July that Sean Mahoney has been promoted into the role of Markets and Utilization Forester. The Markets and Utilization Forester serves as DCR's liaison to the wood products industry.

In Sean's prior experience with DCR in a federally funded position, he promoted the "Buy Local" concept and the Commonwealth Quality program. He arranged sawmill tours for Boston architects who don't know that they can get quality wood products close to home, and spent many hours coordinating a home heating assistance

firewood program for families in need. Sean was also instrumental in advocating for local wood products to be used in the new Walden Pond visitor center.

Sean is a graduate of the University of Vermont. He will be working out of the Military Road office at the Notch in Amherst. He may be contacted at 413 253-1798 x206 or by emailing sean.mahoney@state.ma.us

MFA Forest Update: Now accepting ads, both graphic and text based!

Here at MFA we do our best to connect our members with what is happening around them in the forestry community of New England. We've gotten some requests from our members to allow ads in the Forest Update and we think that's a great idea. We are going to try and keep them to a minimum and have them be unobtrusive—for now we will utilize the sidebar to the left for graphic ads, and the space at the bottom for classified ads.

Sidebar ads: These ads must be in graphic form—a picture in .png format. Prices will vary with length, but the minimum price of \$50/issue will get you an ad 235 x 150 pixels with a hyperlink. While they may be no wider than 235 pixels, they may be any height, for an additional \$15/100 pixels in height. (draft **samples** below)

SAVE the DATE
Sat., June 3, 2017
2017 MFA Annual Meeting
MA Div. of Fisheries & Wildlife
Headquarters
Wayne McCullough Bldg.
1 Rabbit Hill Rd, Westborough, MA



MASSWILDLIFE

Text ads: Text ads are simple as well—\$35/issue for 250 characters and \$1.00 per additional 10 characters. This includes one hyperlink (just tell us what words you wish linked.)

All ads should to be sent to Annette@massforestalliance.org by the first of the month you wish them to run and they will be accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis. When the ad is received we will call you for payment. Discounts for both graphic and text ads are available (pay for 4, get a 5th free).

MFA will continue to run employment opportunities at no charge as we have space available. MFA in its sole discretion may choose not to accept any ad, or change its rates and policies relative to advertisements.

Bottom of page Classified Ad (located on the bottom of the last page in the e-mailed newsletter ...

Details

www.example.org

Globe Article Chronicles Struggles of Vermont Logger

A feature article in *The Boston Sunday Globe* on August 14th described the struggles of Vermont logger, Dave Goodhouse, in coping with the changing economics and daily challenges of logging in 2016. The article can be seen at

http://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2016/08/13/vermont-woods-logger-faces-challenge-remade-industry/mOIlz0VXBMpA7ZLVHtVfwN/story.html?p1=Article_Facet_Related_Article

Forest Legacy Program RFPs Now Available

The Massachusetts Forest Legacy Program is now accepting project proposals for consideration in the federal fiscal year 2018 application process.

The Forest Legacy Program is a partnership between participating states and the USDA Forest Service to protect environmentally important forests from conversion to non-forest uses. The Federal government may fund up to 75% of project costs, with at least 25% coming from private, state or local sources. The MA Forest Legacy Program FY 2018 Request for Proposals application instructions are posted [here](#). Additional background information on the Forest Legacy Program is available [here](#). Proposals must be submitted by 5:00 pm on September 12, 2016.

For more information please contact Lindsay Nystrom, MA Forest Legacy Program Coordinator at lindsay.nystrom@state.ma.us or 508-792-7714 x114.

Upcoming in August and September

- August 20 Project Learning Tree Workshop – Canton
- August 25 Summer Institute for Teachers – Petersham
- August 31 75th Anniversary Tree Farm Tour – Belchertown

- September 7 Forester Licensing Board meeting – Amherst
- Sep 13 -16 Hardwood Lumber Grading Short Course –
Pennsylvania
- September 15 Project Learning Tree workshop – Canton
- September 17 Tree Farm Field Day – Ware
- September 17 Project Learning Tree workshop – Sutton
- September 25 Massachusetts Town Forest Conference – North Brookfield
- Sep 30-Oct 2 Northern Woodland Conference 2016 - Lake Morey, Fairlee, VT

For information about these events, and more, go to www.massforestalliance.org