

Massachusetts Forest Update January 2017

Remembering Kent Lage

I am sad to report that Kent Lage, one of MFA's founding Board of Directors and a longtime friend of forestry and agriculture in Massachusetts, died in December, 2016. Although I'd known Kent since the 1990s, there were long periods of time when he and I had no contact. Others reading this probably knew Kent far better than I did. This is simply a brief personal remembrance.

I recall when I first met Kent thinking something along the lines of "that seems like a Midwest-friendly guy". And that turned out to be true. Hailing from Iowa, Kent retained that cheerful demeanor – despite living in Massachusetts for decades! Every time I saw Kent, he was upbeat, friendly and genuine. He had a great smile, and he smiled a lot.

When we set out to form MFA, I was delighted that Kent was around and willing to serve on the board. He was a great help and a reliable board member. His perspective was especially valuable to a new organization seeking to wade into the policy realm. He knew politics, government, and agriculture well, and learned about forestry along the way. And while he had definite political views, he wasn't dogmatic. I think he had a good feel for human nature, how to work with people, and how to get things done. He provided MFA with wise counsel on issues, often approaching problems from a different angle from others on our board.

When Kent's time on our board was done, he continued to provide advice and perspective whenever asked – and that advice was always useful. He was generous with his time, and will be sorely missed.

Charlie Thompson

Still Time to Donate to MFA's Sponsorship and Annual Fund Drive

By now you should have received a request from MFA to help support our work. Our operating budget is about \$600 per member. To be inclusive, we keep dues very low – most members pay \$75, and even those who pay at the highest levels only pay \$150 for membership. The equation is pretty simple – we have to raise the money to pay for MFA's work on behalf of its members, landowners, and the people who make the forest economy go. Please donate as you're able. We are grateful for the contributions of time and services by unpaid volunteers, but there are real costs that must be met if we are to succeed.

Donations to MFA by businesses may be deductible as a business expense. For individual taxpayers, donations to the Massachusetts Forest Trust (MFT), the

educational 501(c)(3) arm of MFA, are fully tax deductible. Every dollar you give is an investment in the forest economy of Massachusetts.

To make a donation, simply mail your check, payable either to MFA or MFT, to the Massachusetts Forest Alliance, 249 Lakeside Avenue Marlborough, MA 01752-4503. To donate to MFA by credit card, give Annette a call at 617-455-9918.

SWET Holds Successful Modern Wood Heat Tour

The Massachusetts Statewide Wood Energy Team (SWET) held a successful Modern Wood Heat tour in Franklin County on December 2nd. The tour gave state and municipal officials an opportunity to see different types of modern wood heat systems in service and adapted to different building types.

Vermont SWET's Coordinator, Paul Frederick, began the day with a presentation about Vermont's experience in converting a variety of businesses and public buildings, including housing, schools, and government facilities, to various forms of modern wood heat. Frederick also summarized some of the lessons learned during Vermont's three decades of converting facilities to modern wood systems.

After Frederick's presentation, attendees visited the wood pellet installation at the Olver Transportation Center in Greenfield, a six-unit apartment building in Montague, and the recently completed new pellet heating system at Hawlemont Regional School in Charlemont. The group also stopped at Jay Healy's sawmill in Charlemont, learning about Healy's upcoming conversion of his lumber kiln from propane to wood, and viewed a recent woodland harvest to gain a better understanding of what "low-grade" wood is and how its removal can provide fuel while improving future woodlot value.

The Massachusetts SWET promotes greater understanding of renewable wood heating opportunities at all scales: residential, municipal, institutional and commercial. This was the SWET's first tour; the information was well received by the participants, two of whom have begun exploring possible conversion of facilities to modern wood heat systems.

Similar tours are planned for Berkshire and Worcester counties in late winter.

For information about the SWET or different types of modern wood heating systems, visit the Forest Alliance website at www.massforestalliance.org

Massachusetts Maple Sugarers Get National Awards

Two Massachusetts maple syrup producers won awards at the recent North American Maple Syrup Council's annual competition, held this year in Burlington, Vermont.

Melissa Leab of Hancock, MA, won first place in the Maple Cream category, as well as

claiming the top spot for Best of Show among all Maple Products. Sugarmakers from the United States and Canada submitted 170 entries, making for very tough competition in each category. Leab and her husband Rob own and run Ioka Valley Farm. Melissa is also President of the Massachusetts Maple Producers Association.

Tom McCrumm, owner of South Face Farm in Ashfield, was chosen for inclusion in the American Maple Hall of Fame for his decades of commitment to supporting and promoting the maple industry. “It was a big surprise to be chosen for the American Maple Hall of Fame,” said McCrumm. “After 45 years of involvement in the maple syrup industry, it is a great honor to be among two of my mentors already in the Hall – Lew Staats from Cornell University, and Linwood Lesure from Ashfield, who built the sugarhouse which I now own.”

The induction ceremony will be held at the American Maple Hall of Fame in May in Croghan, New York.

Minimum Wage Rises to \$11 per hour on January 1st

Got employees? If so, be aware that the Massachusetts minimum wage rose from \$10 to \$11 on January 1st, 2017.

Reminder: Moving Ash logs or Firewood Requires Quarantine Permits

The winter season is prime time for shipping white ash saw logs or cordwood to market. Anyone planning to do so, however, must obey the EAB quarantine rules and get the required permits.

Due to the presence of the highly destructive invasive Emerald Ash Borer in Massachusetts, the state has a quarantine that regulates the movement of all ash materials, including logs, firewood, bark, seedlings & trees, and lumber. Transporting ash products and hardwood firewood shorter than four feet within the quarantine areas does not require certification. However, transporting ash products and hardwood firewood shorter than four feet across state lines, even between contiguous quarantine states, requires certification.

The EAB quarantine zone includes all of Massachusetts, New York, Connecticut and Pennsylvania, and four counties in New Hampshire. Within this area, with one exception, ash logs and other materials may be moved and processed year round, although federal permits are still required to move ash materials across state lines.

Because ash trees are also potential hosts for the highly destructive, invasive Asian Long-horned Beetles, no ash products or firewood can be moved from within the 110 square mile ALB quarantine zone that includes Worcester, Boylston, West Boylston, Shrewsbury, and parts of Holden and Auburn to communities outside under the ALB

quarantine. You can bring ash products into the ALB zone, but you cannot take them out. Anyone moving ash products or firewood from outside the ALB quarantine to other destinations outside the zone should avoid going through the ALB quarantine area (for example, don't use I-190 or I-290 to go from north to south or vice versa.) as once ash products enter the ALB zone, they legally cannot leave.

Anyone who wishes to move ash or ash products outside of the EAB quarantine zone has two options to do this legally: they can treat the materials (removing the bark and ½ inch of wood, fumigate them, etc) as required to render them unlikely to spread live EABs, or they can move them under permit to facilities that also have Compliance Agreements who have agreed to treat them as required before the beginning of the ash flight period. Any movement of ash products outside of the quarantine zones will require that you have a Compliance Agreement and the required permits from USDA – APHIS.

Movement of any ash materials that have not been treated is restricted to the period (October 1 to April 30) during which EABs do not fly.

For more information about EABs, the quarantine rules, and how to move ash and ash products legally, see the APHIS website at <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/planthealth/plant-pest-and-disease-programs/pests-and-diseases/emerald-ash-borer>

MFA will post more information about the ash quarantines on its website under Resources.

To get the required Compliance Agreements and permits to move ash out of Massachusetts, contact Kaj Thomsen from USDA – APHIS, either by calling him at 508 340-0599 or by email at kaj.thomsen@usda.gov

US Fish & Wildlife Service Plans Large Expansion of Conte Refuge

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service has chosen its “preferred alternative” and released its new 15-year Comprehensive Conservation Plan that proposes to more than quadruple the acreage in federal ownership within the refuge’s boundary.

The plan proposes that the Refuge be allowed to purchase up to 197,000 more acres, from willing sellers, in the Connecticut River corridor between Connecticut and the Canadian border. The proposed expansion has met spirited opposition from towns and residents along the river in Vermont and New Hampshire, who argued that widespread federal land purchases would hurt local communities and local businesses.

When the refuge was originally proposed in the 1990s, the Fish & Wildlife Service emphasized reliance on conservation easements and cooperative agreements with

landowners, rather than federal land acquisition, to protect and manage important habitats in the river basin.

Details of the new plan are available at:

https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Silvio_O_Conte/what_we_do/finalccp.html

The US Fish and Wildlife Service Northeast Regional Director is expected to make a final decision on whether to accept and approve the plan during January.

UMass Summer College in Arboriculture & Urban Forestry for High School Students

Know a high school student who is interested in trees and tree care?

For the past three summers, UMass and Stockbridge have offered a “pre-college” course in Arboriculture & Urban Forestry for high school students. In the course, students get an overview of the Arboriculture & Urban Forestry curriculum that two- and four-year students at Stockbridge and UMass take. UMass hopes to offer the course again this summer, but they need enough students to cover the costs.

The course will run for one week (35 hours of training—in the classroom and in the field) in July 2017. During the course, students learn the importance of safety, basic tree biology and soil science, how to identify trees, how to manage insect and disease pests, how to prune and fertilize, and of course, some basic tree climbing skills.

Typically, students spend the mornings inside, in a classroom, and then the afternoons outside climbing and learning how to identify trees. In addition to the course itself, UMass provides a typical college experience for students, who live in dorms (unless they choose to commute from home), eat at the dining commons, and participate in supervised social activities with classmates.

There are several other pre-college programs going on at the same time, so there are lots of other high school students to meet and make new friends. All of the previous students who enrolled really liked their experience.

The course is an excellent introduction to introduce students to arboriculture or forestry, a way to attract young people to a great career, and a good way to recruit students to attend Stockbridge and UMass. Students don't have to have any experience or special skills, just a good attitude and an interest in learning about trees and being outside. The cost ranges from \$770 to \$1,350, depending upon whether the student lives on campus for the week.

You can find more information by clicking on the link for “Urban Forestry,” at this website: <http://www.umass.edu/summer/precollege.html> or by contacting Brian Kane email to: bkane@eco.umass.edu.

Interested in a Discussion About Biomass in New Hampshire

New Hampshire Public Radio hosted a program about *Biomass Energy in New Hampshire* featuring John Gunn from the University of New Hampshire, Charlie Niebling from Innovative Natural Resource Solutions, science writer John Upton, and forester Richard Roy from Eversource Energy's Schiller Station in Portsmouth.

To hear the hour-long podcast, go to <http://nhpr.org/programs/exchange>

***Field Guide to the Amphibians and Reptiles of Massachusetts* Now Available**

Mass Wildlife is pleased to announce the release of the *Field Guide to the Amphibians and Reptiles of Massachusetts*. This 94-page book includes detailed photographs and descriptions of the frogs, toads, salamanders, snakes, and turtles - including sea turtles - found in the Commonwealth. The field guide, the only of its kind specific to Massachusetts, features species accounts, images of common pattern and color variations, and information about reptile and amphibian conservation.

Lead author Peter Mirick, an avid herpetologist and former editor of *Massachusetts Wildlife* magazine who died in December, combined and updated materials from magazine issues on reptiles and amphibians, with additional contributions from MassWildlife's Dr. Tom French and biologist Jacob Kubel. The majority of photographs were taken by MassWildlife's talented photographer Bill Byrne, with additional images shared by agency staff, herpetologists, scientists, and photographers.

The new publication can be ordered from Mass Wildlife for \$10 from Publications, Mass Division of Fisheries & Wildlife, 1 Rabbit Hill Road, Westborough, MA 01581.

An order form can be downloaded at <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dfg/dfw/publications/order-form-for-dfw-publications.pdf>

Free Forest Adaptation Planning Training Available Online January 16th to March 3rd

The Northern Institute of Applied Climate Science and USDA Northern Forests Climate Hub are offering a free online course on Forest Adaptation Planning and Practices from January 16th to March 3rd. The online course will provide hands-on training in considering climate change information and identifying adaptation actions for natural resources management and conservation, with a focus on New England and New York. Participants will also receive coaching and feedback on their own real-world climate adaptation project.

This training is designed for natural resources professionals working in forests and associated ecosystems in New England and New York. Individuals as well as small teams can participate in the course.

Course participants will be asked to bring their own real-world projects to the course. Such projects could include:

- a forest management or stewardship plan for a property or parcel
- a timber sale or harvest plan for a single stand or multiple stands
- a habitat management plan for a wildlife species

Examples of Adaptation Demonstration projects that have used the Adaptation Workbook are online at www.forestadaptation.org/demos.

For more information, see <http://forestadaptation.org/FAPP-NE>

There is no registration fee thanks to support from the US Forest Service and USDA Northern Forests Climate Hub. To register for the course, go to <http://goo.gl/forms/reGFz1r6xE>

<p>MFA Forest Update: Now accepting ads, both graphic and text! Contact MFA to learn more to place your ad.</p>
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Upcoming Programs & Training

January 18	Oak Forest Regeneration – webinar
January 19	Fire Management at Camp Edwards Field Tour – Falmouth
January 20	Pine Barrens Regional Conservation Forum – West Barnstable
January 25	Forest Adaptation Planning & Practices training – Cambridge
	Eastern Forest Pests Update – webinar
January 28	Estate Planning & Conservation Options – Belchertown
January 31	Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership meeting – Charlemont

February 10	Woodland Connections for Women – Charlemont
February 14	Managing Single-Aged Forests – webinar
February 15	Mass Tree Farm Committee – West Brookfield
February 20	Project Learning Tree workshop -- Worcester
February 22	Nature’s Temples: Complex Old Growth Forests – Boston
February 23	Forester Licensing Board meeting – Amherst
March 14	Creating Age Diversity in Forests – webinar
March 21	Harvard Forest Ecology Symposium -- Petersham

For information about these events, and more, go to www.MassForestAlliance.net/calendar and click on the date of interest in the Events to the right.

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