

Meet a Forester

Brian Hawthorne lives in Plainfield, MA with his wife Carolyn



Brian helps coordinate habitat planning on MassWildlife's **50,000 acres**

In Western MA.



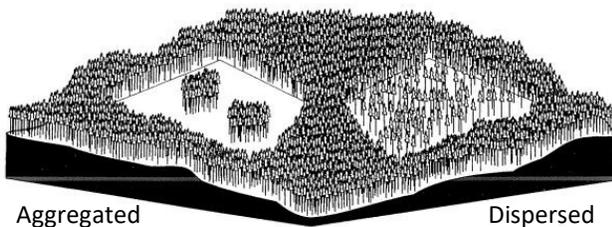
20 years ago, Brian had a successful career in the tech industry, but his high-stress job was impacting his health. Brian decided to go back to school for forestry and he, Carolyn, and their two sons moved to Plainfield. Brian joined MassWildlife in 2004 and is now a **Habitat Planning Coordinator**.

The majority of wildlife species that are in decline in MA need young forest, shrubland, or grassland habitat openings of at least **5 acres**. Newly created young forest provides habitat for **20-30 years**.



10-20% of the forest canopy cover is left aggregated in groups. This is different from a dispersed retention harvest model, which leaves scattered trees throughout an area and doesn't create large enough openings for many wildlife species.

Brian hopes that MassWildlife's habitat creation program inspires other foresters and landowners to do this kind of work. However, without markets for the low-grade wood that needs to be cut, private landowners may need to seek funding to help them create young forest habitat.



Aubry et al. USFS Publication, 1999. Figure by Ken Bible.

Community Connections...

Brian is a member of the Forest Stewards Guild, the Massachusetts Forest Alliance, and the Wildlife Society. Brian is on his Town's Planning Board, co-leads the Town Broadband project, is a firefighter and EMT, and manages the town website and email system. His work is important in keeping his community safe and connected.



Brian often holds before and after tours for the public so they can see habitat creation at work.



Tracy Pond Wildlife Management Area, before and after harvest



Montague Plains Wildlife Management Area, regenerating oak



Montague Plains WMA, less desirable forest edge

Brian recently cleared 1/2 acre of his own land to install solar panels and is still using that wood to fuel his wood stove. He is a member of his local community garden, harvests wild berries, and enjoys the jam he makes throughout the winter.



Carolyn is an art teacher. Their older son is a professional photographer and their younger son is studying molecular biochemistry.



Eastern Towhee and Field Sparrow in young forest. Bird photos by Bill Byrne courtesy of MassWildlife.

“Working as a forester may not be the most financially lucrative choice of careers, but it has been one of the most personally rewarding things I have ever done in my life (second only to my family). The more I learn, the more I know that I don’t know. Perhaps more than anything else, the forest tries to teach me humility every day” -Brian Hawthorne