

Massachusetts Forest Update April 2018

Love Your Land? Forest Alliance Annual Conference will Explore Different Options to Enjoy it.

MFA's Annual Meeting and Conference will take place on Saturday, May 5th, at Mass Wildlife's Headquarters in Westborough. This year's conference's theme is "*Loving the Land*". The conference will feature presentations on wildlife management, climate change, road improvements, and different ways to generate income from your woods – so anyone who owns or manages woods should make plans to attend!

Conference Schedule

6:30 am	Bird Walk on Mass Wildlife grounds
7:30 am	Registration Trade Show exhibits open
8:30 am	Welcome – Nathan L'Etoile & Charlie Thompson, MFA
9 am	Keynote Address – Mariko Yamasaki, U. S. Forest Service researcher
10 am	Presentation of <i>2018 Massachusetts Forest Stewardship Award</i>
10:30 – 10:40 am	Forester & Wood Producer Council meetings
10:45 – 11:45	Morning Workshops <i>Tentrr</i> – Auxiliary Meeting Room <i>Rare Species & Improving Habitat</i> – Main Meeting Room
11:45 am	Trade Show break
11:45 – 1:15	Lunch
12:15 – 1:10	MFA Business Meeting – Auxiliary Meeting Room
1:15 – 2:15	1 st Session Afternoon Workshops <i>Climate Change & Adaptive Management</i> – Main Meeting Room <i>Products to Improve Woods Roads</i> -- Auxiliary Meeting Room
2:20 – 3:20	<i>Adapting Agroforestry to Your Property</i> – Main Meeting Room

Developing and Renting a Sugarbush – Auxiliary Meeting Room

3:30 Silent Auction Closes
 Trade Show Closes

To sign up for the Conference, go to <https://www.massforestalliance.net/annual-meeting-registration/> . Cost of the conference is \$45 for members, \$100 for non-members.

Remembering Doug Cook

Forest Alliance Board member and business owner Douglas B. Cook, 54, of Hopkinton, MA passed away suddenly on March 25, 2018. He leaves behind his beloved family, wife Diane Stelfox Cook of Hopkinton, children, Noelle Cook, Peter Cook, and Katherine Cook of Mendon, Matthew Doyle of New York City and Brian Doyle of Hopkinton, his mother Sally Cook and brother Duncan Cook of West Falmouth.

Doug was a proud graduate of the University of Maine, Orono. He earned two degrees: Forest Engineering and Civil Engineering. His love for the outdoors began in childhood, and continued during his time in Maine, where as a student, he started the business that would grow to be one of the largest forestry companies in New England, Cook Forest Products of Upton.

Although Doug is remembered for being a hard worker, it is his love for family and friends, and his drive to do anything for them, that will be so greatly missed. He was a warm and strong presence everywhere.

Doug was a passionate skier and especially loved the woods of Jay Peak and introducing others to the thrill of being outdoors. He loved fishing from his Shamrock which he salvaged and rebuilt. He looked forward to OBH hockey.

Sign up for free Game of Logging Training

This spring, the Massachusetts Forest Trust, the Department of Conservation & Recreation, and the Tree Farm Program are holding a series of free two day *Safe Chainsaw Operation* workshops for landowners, Tree Farmers and others in central and western Massachusetts. If you want to improve your skills in how to maintain and use a chainsaw safely, register for one of these workshops.

The workshops will be based on the popular *Game of Logging* curriculum and be taught by GOL instructor Bill Girard. Each workshop will consist of two days of instruction and cover 2 levels of the GOL curriculum.

There are four Game of Logging training levels:

Level 1 focuses on introducing the participant to open face felling and the development of techniques to safely use it. Topics covered include personal protective equipment, chainsaw safety features, chainsaw reactive forces, bore cutting, pre-planning the fell, and understanding hinge wood strength.

Level 2 focuses on maximizing chainsaw performance through basic maintenance, carburetor setting, and filing techniques. Limbing and bucking techniques are introduced, spring pole cutting is covered and more felling is practiced.

Level 3 focuses on techniques for handling difficult trees. Topics covered include limbing, height measurement, segment calculations, wedging techniques and hinge placement. The felling is done against the tree's natural lean and participants also limb and buck using techniques demonstrated in Level II.

Level 4 focuses on ways to maximize a harvest plan for safety and productivity. Felling is practiced at working speed using all the techniques from previous levels. This level is geared to the capabilities of the user group.

Workshop locations and dates:

April 28 – 29	Fraser property – Chesterfield	Levels 1 – 2 full
May 12 – 13	Maple Corner Farm – Granville	Levels 1 – 2
May 19 – 20	Taverntop Trust Tree Farm – Hawley	Levels 1 – 2
May 21 – 22	Norwood property – Northfield	Levels 3 - 4
June 6 – 7	DCR – New Salem	Levels 3 – 4 full

Workshops will run from 8 am to 3 pm.

Participants must be 18 years of age or older and in good physical condition. Participants taking the Levels 3 – 4 workshop must have successfully completed Levels 1 and 2 previously. Thanks to a grant from the US Forest Service, these workshops are free, but each workshop is limited to 8 participants, so sign up early.

Please contact Greg Cox from MFA to sign up by calling (413) 339-5526 or email gcox@crocker.com

Workshops sponsored by the USDA – Forest Service and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation.

Chapter 61 Tax Values Follow Stumpage Prices Up in 2019 Tax Year

Tax valuations for woodlands under Chapter 61 or 61A will rise sharply in the tax year that begins July 1st, reflecting the strong markets for timber in the past year.

The average woodland tax valuation will rise from \$88/acre to \$99/acre for woodlands west of the Connecticut River, a 12.5 % increase, and from \$62/acre to \$78/acre for woodlands east of the river, a 25.8% increase. Highly productive woodlands west of the river would be valued at \$119/acre, with below average woodlands at \$79/acre. Highly productive woodlands east of the river would be valued at \$94/acre, with low productivity woodlands at \$62/acre.

The tax valuation for wetlands or unproductive land would rise from \$40/acre to \$48/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 \$66 total to \$74.25 in fiscal 2018, while taxes on an average 50-acre woodland east of the river with a \$15 tax rate would rise from \$46.50 total to \$58.50.

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:

<https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2018/03/28/2019chapter61afarmlandvalues.pdf>

Selling or Buying Timber? Help Track Prices with the Online Stumpage Survey

The Southern New England Stumpage survey is the oldest continuous stumpage survey in the Eastern U.S. For decades, stumpage price information has been compiled every quarter to document the current price trends for standing timber sold in southern New England. The results of the survey are used by foresters, mills, loggers, and landowners. The state also uses the results to generate the Chapter 61 current use tax values each year. In short, we all use it and depend on it!

With the retirement of Extension Forester Dave Kittredge, UMass Extension has developed a new online stumpage price survey to reduce time in sending out and compiling the results of the voluntary quarterly survey. Anyone who has bought or sold

stumpage in the past 3 months is requested to report on the prices received or paid for the timber by species.

Extension forester Paul Catanzato has just sent out the new online quarterly survey to foresters, mills, loggers and others so they can report prices paid for timber. The information received will be tallied and reported in the quarterly stumpage reports which can be viewed or downloaded at www.masswoods.net

For more information on the new online survey, see : <https://masswoods.org/southern-new-england-stumpage-price-survey>

Forest Health

The winter moth population is at a record low!

The 2018 outlook concerning winter moth caterpillar population numbers in Massachusetts is very positive for those in the eastern areas of the state accustomed to dealing with damaging populations of this insect. UMass professor Joseph Elkinton lab's research data suggest that this invasive pest's population size is at an all-time low. The 2017 winter moth population was the lowest they have seen since studying and working toward the biological control of this insect for the past 13 years. The populations of winter moth are so low in Massachusetts at this time, that Dr. Elkinton's lab and scouts for UMass Extension's Landscape Message are having a very difficult (to impossible) time locating winter moth eggs to monitor egg color change, development, and hatch for the 2018 season.

The eggs of this insect, if they can be found, were laid by the females who emerged in November of 2017 and were active through the winter months (mainly November through December when temperatures are above freezing). Eggs are currently present in the landscape and hidden in cracks and crevices of bark or beneath lichen on host plants such as oak, maple, apple, blueberry, crabapple, etc. Eggs are tiny and green when first laid, but quickly turn a red-orange color soon after. At this time, anyone monitoring winter moth eggs will most likely see that they are orange in color. As the egg develops, it will turn a bright blue color, shortly prior to egg hatch.

For more information about the life cycle and management of winter moth (*Operophtera brumata*), see the fact sheet: Winter Moth Identification and Management (<https://ag.umass.edu/landscape/fact-sheets/winter-moth-identification-management>).

Gypsy Moth Defoliation is Expected to Drop Sharply in 2018

The outlook for the 2018 season in regard to gypsy moth (*Lymantria dispar*) is significantly better than it would have been if the fungus *Entomophaga maimaiga* hadn't decimated the gypsy moth caterpillar population in late June 2017. At that time, many

dead caterpillars were seen hanging from tree trunks and branches, killed by the fungus, which was aided by the wet spring weather earlier in the year. Nonetheless, gypsy moths defoliated more than 927,000 acres of woodlands in 2017 and while populations are expected to be much lower in 2018, there are still gypsy moth egg masses on host plant trunks and branches such as oak (favored), maple, birch, poplar, and many others.

(information from *UMass Extension Landscape Message*)

Wood Energy News

Get Help Replacing an Old Wood Stove

The Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC), in coordination with the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources, is launching the 2018 Wood Stove Change-Out Program.

Any Massachusetts resident or business currently operating a non-EPA-certified wood stove or fireplace insert is eligible for a rebate of **up to \$1,750** when replacing an existing stove with an eligible model. Those that meet certain income requirements are eligible for rebates of **up to \$3,250**.

If you own an old wood stove and would like to replace it with a new, low-emission EPA-certified wood or pellet stove, visit Mass CEC's website at http://www.masscec.com/commonwealth-woodstove-change-out?mc_cid=667e933a46&mc_eid=5036b1aa0d to find out more.

You will need to contact a [local stove professional](#) who will confirm that your old stove is eligible and submit a rebate application on your behalf after installing your new stove.

Act now to make sure you don't miss the August 28th application deadline!

Wood stove change-outs are one of the most effective ways to lower emissions from your wood stove and to get more heat out of your fuel!

Mass CEC also has incentive funds available to help homeowners and businesses convert their buildings to a form of modern wood heat. For more information on these programs, see <http://www.masscec.com/residential/clean-heating-and-cooling>

Check Out the Wood Energy Financial Calculator

The Biomass Thermal Energy Center has developed a new Wood Energy Financial Calculator to help property owners determine the costs and benefits of converting to a wood fired system.

The Wood Energy Financial Calculator is intended to help you to decide if a wood energy system is right for you, and what would be the financial costs and benefits of investing in a wood energy heating system for your building. Whether you are considering using wood chips, pellets or cord wood, the Calculator can give you a good first-cut estimate of how much investment would be required for a wood energy system, the wood fuel costs, the fossil fuel saving and payback period.

The Calculator can be used by those who intend to retrofit their facility to either use wood for 100 percent of their heating needs or just a percentage. For those who intend to use wood for less than 100 percent of their heat needs, the Calculator assumes you will be using your current fossil fuel system to supply the balance of your heating requirements, and does not account for any additional costs.

One of the new features of the Calculator includes the ability to estimate costs for new construction. If you know the square footage for the newly planned facility and its location by zip code, the financial costs of a wood energy system can be calculated. However, just like with a retrofitted building, when the calculator estimates of costs for a wood heating system in new construction, it does not account for the costs that may be necessary for a fossil fueled back up system, if you are not heating 100 percent with wood.

For more information or to use the calculator, go to www.biomassthermal.org

Lignetics Acquires New England Wood Pellet

In February, Lignetics Inc. announced the acquisition of New England Wood Pellet LLC, which includes manufacturing plants in Jaffrey, New Hampshire; Schuyler, New York; Deposit, New York; and Youngsville, Pennsylvania, giving Lignetics a strong position in the New England and mid-Atlantic markets. Lignetics is the largest residential wood pellet manufacturing company in the U.S. which, post-acquisition, has a production capacity of approximately 1 million tons of wood pellets per year. The company is the only pellet manufacturer that has wood pellet manufacturing plants in the East, Central, and West geography with 13 plant locations in the states of Maine, Oregon (2), Idaho, West Virginia, Virginia, Wisconsin (3), New Hampshire, New York (2), and Pennsylvania.

Charlie Niebling, INRS partner and former New England Wood Pellet general manager for sales and wood procurement, will maintain a consulting relationship with Lignetics, including government and regulatory affairs, external industry relations, and wood procurement for the Jaffrey NH facility.

Wildlife

Please Report Bat Colonies

Since the onset of white-nose syndrome (WNS) in Massachusetts, the state's population of little brown bats has dwindled to less than 1% of what it once was. In one abandoned mine, almost every bat hibernating over the 2008/2009 winter died from WNS—nearly 10,000 bats dropped to just 14. First seen in bats hibernating in a cave near Albany, New York in 2006, WNS is caused by a fungus that grows on cave-hibernating bats during the winter. The growing fungus rouses the bats from hibernation, causing them to use up precious fat stores before fully waking in the spring, leading to starvation. As a result of the drastic mortality from WNS, all species of cave bats that hibernate in Massachusetts are now listed as endangered on the Massachusetts Endangered Species List.

Two species of bats—the little brown bat and the big brown bat—form summer colonies in trees, buildings, attics, barns, sheds, and other outbuildings in Massachusetts. Little brown bats also hibernate in caves during the winter, where they can contract WNS. Before WNS, little brown bats were the most common bat species in the state. Now, they are one of the species most affected by WNS in Massachusetts. We are especially interested in understanding the post-WNS status of little brown bat populations, including knowing the size and location of their colonies.

Last year, MassWildlife asked residents to report bat colonies to help better assess where bats are during the summer months in Massachusetts. More than 100 colonies were reported and Mass Wildlife was able to survey one third of them.

Your help is needed again this year. If there is a colony of 10 or more bats on your property, please email Jennifer Longsdorf, Bat Conservation Project Coordinator, at **jennifer.longsdorf@state.ma.us**. Include the address, location, type of structure where the colony is (tree, building, attic, barn, shed, or other outbuilding), approximately how many bats are in the colony, and approximately how long the bats have been there. This information will be used to help conserve the state's endangered population of little brown bats.

Northeast Silviculture Institute to hold 4 Silvicultural Training Workshops for Foresters in 2018

The Northeast Silviculture Institute provides practicing field foresters new and up to date silvicultural knowledge to help them make better decisions in managing forests in the Northeast.

In 2018 the Institute will hold 4 training workshops about graduate level silviculture for major forest types in New England. Workshops include:

May 16 – 17	Pine, Oak & Hemlock Silviculture	Portsmouth NH
June 13 – 14	Spruce Fir Silviculture	Oreno, ME
July 12 – 13 CT	Mixed Oak & Hickory Silviculture	Sturbridge, MA & Eastford,
September 5 – 6	Northern Hardwood Silviculture	Bartlett, NH

For more information, see www.northeastsilvicultureinstitute.org

Employment

Gutchess Lumber Seeking Forestry Technician

Gutchess Lumber Company is seeking a Forestry Technician in Canaan, NY.

Responsibilities include:

- the scaling and grading of gatewood timber and logs,
- assistance in marketing and the sale of logs not bound for Gutchess Lumber Co., (GLC) facilities,
- storage of logs, loading and unloading of trucks, data collection and data transfer,
- environmental and regulatory compliance, job safety,
- control and maintenance of GLC wood concentration areas, equipment and property.

For more information, contact Gutchess Lumber Company, P.O. Box 5478, Cortland, NY 13045 or call 607 753-3393

Ask an Expert

Got a nagging question? A serious one, or a casual one? Think that others might have that same question? Send an [e-mail to our executive director](#) with "ask an expert" in the subject, and we'll try and identify an expert, ask them the question, and publish their answer in the next Forest Update.

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

Upcoming Programs and Training

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| April 18 | Silviculture of Spruce Mixedwoods -- webinar |
| April 21 | Project Learning Tree workshop – Lawrence |
| April 26 | Estate Planning & Land Conservation workshop – Russell |
| April 28 – 29 | Safe Chainsaw Operation Training – Chesterfield |
| April 28 | Capturing Critters with Wildlife Cameras workshop – Ashfield |
| April 28 | Aerial Insectivorous Birds Conference – Petersham |
| April 28 | Using Farm Tractors in Forestry workshop – Brookfield, NH |
| April 28 | Reading the Forested Landscape – Northfield |
| May 4 | Regeneration Harvesting Workshop – Cavendish, VT |
| May 5 | Forest Alliance Annual Meeting & Programs – Westborough |
| May 7 | Voluntary Public Access Information Meeting – Williamstown |
| May 12 – 13 | Safe Chainsaw Operation Training – Granville |
| May 16 – 17 | Pine, Oak & Hemlock Silviculture – Portsmouth, NH |
| May 19 – 20 | Safe Chainsaw Operation Training – Hawley |
| May 21 – 22 | Safe Chainsaw Operation Training -- Northfield |

Additional information about these and other events will be posted at www.massforestalliance.net/calendar as information becomes available.