

Massachusetts Forest Update

June 2018

Forest Alliance Seeking Candidates for Executive Director

The “problem” with great hires is that they inevitably move on to another opportunity. Unfortunately for MFA, our Executive Director, Nathan L’Etoile, will be moving into a leadership position in another organization. He will be with MFA through August, and that should provide us time for an orderly transition, but we need your help to find the next executive director. Maybe it’s you! The Board of Directors has developed a position description and timeline for filling the position. We will begin to review resumes in about a month and move as quickly as possible to bring on the right candidate. If you know of someone who might be a good prospect, please refer them to the job posting below. Our continued success depends on the combination of strong members and talented employees.

Position Announcement:

The Massachusetts Forest Alliance is looking for candidates for Executive Director to advance and lead a trade organization and associated land trust that advocates on behalf of a strong, sustainable forest economy, with a focus on keeping forests as forests. MFA was formed in 2012 through the merger of existing organizations representing foresters, landowners, harvesters, and others who make a living from forest management. MFA has successfully represented the interests of its constituent member groups to the public and government.

The position location and employment arrangements are flexible; compensation is anticipated to range from \$50,000-\$70,000 annually, depending on experience.

For additional information, see www.massforestalliance.net/mfa-seeks-an-executive-director/

Timber Harvest Tour in Hubbardston June 22nd

Have you considered having timber cut on your property? Do you have questions about the process involved or different types of equipment used to cut and remove the wood?

If so, you may want to come on a Timber Harvest Tour that will be held in Hubbardston on **Friday, June 22nd at 9 a.m.** The Massachusetts Forest Trust and the Department of Conservation & Recreation have been holding a series of tours of active logging operations to show landowners how different types of harvest are conducted and how they can have wood cut while protecting the environmental values of their properties.

At the Hubbardston tour on June 22nd, participants will visit an active harvest site on a state watershed and see how the work is being carried out using different types of forestry equipment. The harvest consists of a series of 1 to 5 acre patch cuts where most of the trees in an area are removed. The newly created openings will allow a more diverse forest to regrow, creating better habitat for wildlife and transforming the forest into a multi-aged woodland with areas of large older trees interspersed with areas of new growth. The mixture of tree sizes should make the forest more resilient in severe weather events. This current harvest will affect only about 25 percent of the 100-acre woodland.

The logging operation featured uses a mechanical harvester to cut the timber and a grapple skidder to bring it to the landing to either be loaded on trucks for transport to a mill, or to be processed into firewood or wood chips.

This tour is free and open to the public. Participants should dress for the weather conditions with suitable footwear for a hike on sometimes rough terrain. Participants should wear pants and long sleeves and bring bug spray to prevent tick bites.

The tour will meet at 9 am on June 22nd at the Pirner sawmill parking lot at 152 Williamsville Road in Hubbardston. Participants will then carpool to the actual logging site. The tour will be postponed if there is heavy rain or lightning.

Preregistration is encouraged so participants can be notified should a tour be postponed or cancelled. To preregister, call Greg Cox at (413) 339-5526 or email gcox@crocker.com.

Massachusetts House Passes MFA-led Estate Tax Reform

For the last two years, MFA has led a push to reform the state estate tax code to allow forest and farm lands to be valued at their use value, not their highest and best use, when computing estate taxes. We reported earlier that we were successful in getting the Governor to put this language in the environmental bond bill, a package usually devoted to funding capital programs such as land conservation, park improvements, and energy saving programs. The Massachusetts House of Representatives passed the bond bill with overwhelming support last week, embracing the governor's language after a lot of hard work on the part of MFA and other partner organizations.

Forestland owners own land for many reasons – privacy, wildlife, family legacies, income generation, asset protection, and more. When in private ownership, that land is often enrolled in current use taxation, a program that reduces the property tax on the land, but also provides a false sense of security. In many communities, the full and fair land values are not shown on the tax bill, and someone paying a few hundred dollars a year may lose sight of the true value of the property. Currently, when a landowner dies without proper estate planning (and sometimes even despite it) forestland assets can result in tax bills that force the parcelization or development of that land. In Massachusetts, any estate with over one million dollars in assets must pay taxes on all

but the first \$40,000. While it starts at just 0.8%, the tax climbs to 16% for the largest estates.

Under the proposed changes, forestland would contribute little to the valuation of an estate. Using the most recent Chapter 61 values, it would take almost 10,000 acres of the most productive forestland to have an estate's forestland alone be valued high enough to put it into the taxable bracket for estate taxes.

New Forest Habitat Tours in Tolland June 23rd

Just as some people prefer to live in cities and others prefer small towns instead, many wildlife species need varying habitats in order to thrive. Many once-common wildlife species in Massachusetts have been declining in numbers because the specific mix of habitat required for nesting, shelter and food supply has become rare here. The key to increasing the populations of those species is to provide more habitat that is suited to their needs.

One habitat type that has become rare in Massachusetts is young forest that typically develops after larger disturbances – whether from heavy tree cutting, natural events, or farm abandonment. This temporary habitat with its mix of low growing herbaceous plants, tree seedlings, and berry producing shrubs provides a wide mixture of foods and cover for wildlife until new trees grow tall enough to shade out the low plants. A diverse mix of young plants and foods provides habitat elements for many key species. In the 1950s, after the 1938 hurricane, such young forest habitats covered nearly half of the state. Today, young forest habitats amount to just 5 percent of our woodlands.

A coalition of conservation, forestry and wildlife groups will hold a Creating a Balanced Forest Landscape workshop at the Tunxis Club in Tolland on Saturday June 23rd from 9 am to noon to demonstrate how such young forest habitats can be created and how they evolve over time as the forest regrows to provide changing habitats for rare wildlife species. Landowners, community officials, educators and others who are interested in attracting species such as golden-winged warblers, woodcock, white-throated sparrows, towhees, and New England cottontails should try to take part.

The program will show how different stages of forest growth affect which wildlife live on and visit different areas. The morning tour will visit three different stages of forest growth to observe the wildlife using them. Sites include a proposed harvest site, a recently completed harvest site, and a site that has regrown following a harvest 10 years earlier.

The wildlife habitat program will be held at the Tunxis Club at 977 Clubhouse Road in Tolland rain or shine, so participants should dress appropriately for the weather with long pants and sturdy boots, and bring binoculars and bug spray. Coffee and light refreshments will be provided.

This program is being sponsored by the Tunxis Club, the USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), the Ruffed Grouse Society, the Mass. Department of Conservation & Recreation, the Division of Fisheries & Wildlife, the Massachusetts Forest Alliance, the Wildlife Management Institute and the Massachusetts Audubon Society.

For more information, contact Tom Brule at (413) 346-7667 or email tom.brule@gmail.com

Jack Buckley Named 2018 Massachusetts Forest Stewardship Award Recipient

MFA periodically recognizes individuals or organizations with the John H. Lambert Jr. Forest Stewardship Award for exemplary stewardship and conservation of forests and trees in Massachusetts. The award, established in 1993, was first awarded to former Chief Forester Jack Lambert for whom it is named.

This year's recipient is Jack Buckley of Mass Wildlife for his important contributions to the formulation of wise forest policy in Massachusetts, his recognition of the environmental benefits of managed forestlands, and his support for innovative ideas and partnerships to make forestry more viable and beneficial.

Buckley, who recently retired from Mass Wildlife, was instrumental in establishing Mass Wildlife's Landowner Incentive Program, which provides financial assistance to private landowners and organizations for practices to improve or diversify habitats in Massachusetts.

Buckley was presented with the Lambert Award at the MFA Annual Meeting on May 5th.

2018 Chapter 132 Workshops for Licensed Harvesters

The Department of Conservation & Recreation's Service Forestry Program will hold its annual series of 10 workshops for licensed timber harvesters on Chapter 132 Forest Cutting Practices regulations around Massachusetts between June 11th and June 20th.

Licensed harvesters are required to take 9 hours of continuing education every three years to maintain their license, including 3 hours on Massachusetts forestry laws and regulations. Attending one of the DCR workshops will meet the 3 hour forestry laws and regulations requirement.

Workshops will be held at the following dates, times & locations

June 11th Old Barn – Myles Standish State Forest – South Carver 3 – 6 pm

June 12 th	Pepperell Library – Pepperell	12:30 – 3:30 pm
June 12 th	Davenport/Davis Mine Road intersection – Rowe	1 – 4 pm
June 13 th	DCR – Water Supply – West Boylston	12:30 – 3:30 pm
June 13 th	Polish American Club – South Deerfield	2 – 5 pm
June 14 th	Swift River Sportsmen’s Club – Belchertown	1 – 4 pm
June 18 th	Athol Public Library – Athol	1 – 4 pm
June 19 th	Brimfield Public Library – Brimfield	3 – 6 pm
June 19 th	DCR Regional Headquarters – Pittsfield	3 – 6 pm
June 20 th	Big Elm Brewing – Sheffield	3 – 6 pm

For more information on specific workshops, including registration information, check the calendar on the Forest Alliance website at www.massforestalliance.net/calendar

Interested in Taking a Game of Logging Workshop? Let MFA Know

The Massachusetts Forest Trust recently held the last of 6 Game of Logging chainsaw workshops to teach landowners, land stewards, foresters and loggers how to use chainsaws safely in working in the woods. Taking part in the workshop series this spring were 21 landowners, 3 trail stewards, 2 students, 4 foresters, 6 licensed harvesters, and 1 arborist. 36 participants completed GOL Level I & II workshops, while 15 completed Level III & IV workshops.

These spring workshops were paid for by a grant from the USDA Forest Service through DCR. Certified Game of Logging instructor Bill Girard taught the workshops which were held on woodlands in Pelham, Chesterfield, Granville, Hawley, Northfield and New Salem.

Given the high demand for these safety workshops, the Forest Trust will be exploring holding one or two additional workshops farther east in the fall. Cost of the workshops will be about \$300 per participant for a two-day Level I & II workshop, possibly less if we can find more grant funding.

If you or anyone you know are interested in taking a Game of Logging workshop, let Greg Cox know by calling (413) 339-5526 or by email at gcox@crocker.com

Got a Site for the 2018 Tree Farm Field Day?

The Massachusetts Tree Farm Committee is looking for a Tree Farm to highlight at this year’s Tree Farm Field Day. The Field Day is normally held on a Tree Farm and part of

the activities are to show how the host Tree Farmers are managing their woods. The Field Day is normally held on a Saturday in September.

If you would be interested in hosting this year's Field Day at your property, please contact Greg Cox at (413) 339-5526 or email gcox@crocker.com

Wood Energy News

How High will Fuel Prices go Next Winter?

Are you ready for high heating costs next winter? The days of cheap energy are becoming a thing of the past.

The strong economy, restricted oil supplies and the Iran sanctions have combined to push fossil fuel prices higher than they've been since 2014; banking on future price decreases might be risky. Gas prices have exceeded \$3/gallon in some areas of Massachusetts and may continue to rise.

Heating oil prices, which normally drop during the summer when refiners concentrate on producing gasoline, now average \$3.09/gallon, up nearly 30 percent from the \$2.40/gallon average price last June, and up 20 cents from the \$2.89/gallon average price this past winter. Overall, average heating oil prices have risen more than 40 percent since they dropped to just \$2.19/gallon average in 2016. A cold winter or even tighter oil supplies could result in average prices next winter flirting with the \$3.90/gallon level that was the average from 2012 to 2014, 82 percent higher than in 2016.

By comparison, wood pellet prices have risen less than 6 percent in the past year, with the bulk price average of \$271/ton compared with \$256/ton last year. And, bagged pellet prices have actually fallen 5 percent, from \$260/ton to \$246/ton.

If you are considering replacing or upgrading your heating system, now might be a good time to take advantage of Mass CEC's incentives (see below) to install a modern wood stove or pellet heating system, reduce your fuel usage, and avoid the fossil fuel roller coaster.

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>

Should Your Town be a Heat Smart Community?

The Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC) and the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) will soon be seeking new community applications for the [HeatSmart Massachusetts](#) program.

HeatSmart Mass is a community purchasing program similar to the highly successful [Solarize Mass Program](#) but for clean heating and cooling technologies, which include [air-source heat pumps](#), [ground-source heat pumps](#), [modern wood heating](#), and [solar hot water](#). These technologies provide heating at a fraction of the carbon emissions of traditional fossil fuel heating systems, all while offering a high level of comfort and cost savings when offsetting high-cost heating fuels such as oil, propane, and electricity.

Four pilot HeatSmart communities were selected in fall 2017 and launched their campaigns in early 2018. While their campaigns are still ongoing, they're off to a strong start and generating great interest! MassCEC and DOER plan to release community solicitation request applications for new interested Massachusetts towns in July 2018.

If your town is interested, here is how to prepare to apply for inclusion:

- Review the HeatSmart Mass Pilot Program Solicitation and Application materials. MassCEC and DOER anticipate that the application for the next round of the program will be similar to the pilot round application
- Familiarize yourself with the clean heating and cooling technologies and think about which ones might be a good fit for your town
- Contact key residents and town officials to gauge interest in participating
- Talk to local non-profits, community organizations, schools, banks, businesses, and utilities about forming strategic partnerships
- Review the pilot program FAQs

For more information, contact MassCEC at 617-315-9300, or visit their website at www.masscec.com .

New Wood Chip Quality Standards now in Effect

In 2017 a coalition, including the Biomass Energy Resource Center, the Biomass Thermal Energy Council, the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers, and Innovative Natural Resource Solutions LLC received funding from the USDA Forest Service to develop a national wood chip heating fuel quality standard.

Developing a technical fuel quality standard will lead to better and tighter boiler engineering around known fuel quality, which will lead to better performance and help accelerate market adoption of this renewable heating fuel and technology. A wood chip heating fuel quality standard is essential to improve the performance, efficiency, and reliability of wood chip heating systems and enhance the technical credibility and market confidence that will help expand the wood chip heating market.

The new ASABE AD17225-4 U. S. Wood Chip Heating Fuel Quality Standards applies to both green and dry chips, whether derived from forestry operations or from wood manufacturing, provided that no chemical treatment has been used. The standard has now been formally adopted and can be applied to fuel production, procurement and use across the U.S.

Additional information about the standard can be found at www.woodchipstandard.org

Wildlife

Report Turkey Colonies

Sportsmen and women, birders, and other wildlife enthusiasts are asked to assist with MassWildlife's Annual Wild Turkey Brood Survey.

MassWildlife conducts a Brood Survey from June 1 through August 31 each year to estimate the number of turkeys in the state. The brood survey helps our biologists determine productivity and compare long-term reproductive success while providing an estimate of fall harvest potential. Turkey nesting success can vary annually in response to weather conditions, predator populations, and habitat characteristics.

Citizen involvement in this survey is a cost-effective means of gathering useful data, and can be a fun way for people to connect with nature.

To take part, record sightings of hens, poults (newly-hatched turkeys), and males (both juvenile and adult). For help identifying male and female turkeys and determining if a male is a juvenile (jake) or an adult (tom), **please click here**. Be sure to look carefully when counting turkey broods - very small poults may be difficult to see in tall grass or brush. MassWildlife is interested in turkey brood observations from all regions of the state, including rural and developed areas.

Two ways to participate:

- **Report individual observations online**

or

- Download and print a **Turkey Brood Survey form** to complete over the course of the summer.
Mail completed forms to: Brood Survey, MassWildlife Field Headquarters, 1 Rabbit Hill Road, Westborough, MA 01581.

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

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

- June 20th **Chapter 132 Workshop for Licensed Harvesters – Sheffield**
- June 20 – 21 **National Firewood Workshop – Frankenmuth, MI**
- June 21 **Massachusetts Tree Farm Committee meeting – West Brookfield**
- June 22 **Timber Harvest Tour – Hubbardston**
- June 23 **Creating a Balanced Forest Landscape Workshop – Tolland**
- June 23 **Christmas Tree Growers Gathering -- Southwick**
- June 30 **Timber Harvesting 101 for Conservation Commissions & Town Officials workshop – Southbridge**
- July 17 **Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership meeting – Charlemont**

July 30 Project Learning Tree workshop—North Easton

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