



LAND PROTECTION PROGRAMS AND FUNDING SOURCES

Call or email the North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership for more information and assistance with these programs: 978-248-2118, info@nqpartnership.org

National

Forest Legacy Program

The Forest Legacy Program is a partnership between Massachusetts and other states with the USDA Forest Service to identify and help conserve environmentally and economically important forests. The main tool used for protecting these forests is conservation restrictions, which leave the ownership of the land in private hands while permanently protecting important forest resources. Landowners can continue to live on and use their property for activities such as harvesting timber, and hunting, but the ability to develop the part of the property in the conservation restriction is permanently restricted.

The Federal government may fund up to 75% of the cost of a conservation restriction, with at least 25% coming from private, state or local sources.

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(978) 368-0126 x114
mike.fleming@state.ma.us
www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/forestry/other/

Map of eligible areas in Massachusetts for Forest Legacy funding:
www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/forestry/other/images/ma_flp_map.jpg

North American Wetlands Conservation Act Grants

The North American Wetlands Conservation Act of 1989 provides matching grants to organizations and individuals who have developed partnerships to carry out wetlands conservation projects in the United States for the benefit of wetlands-associated migratory birds and other wildlife. There is a Standard and a Small Grants Program. Both are competitive grants programs and require that grant requests be matched by partner contributions at no less than a 1-to-1 ratio. Funds from U.S. Federal sources may contribute towards a project, but are not eligible as match.

The Standard Grants Program supports projects that involve long-term protection, restoration, and/or enhancement of wetlands and associated uplands habitats. Typical grants are around one million dollars or more. The application process is very rigorous and takes a great deal of time. The Small Grants Program supports the same type of projects and adheres to the same selection criteria and administrative guidelines as the U.S. Standard Grants Program. However, project activities are usually smaller in scope and involve fewer project dollars. Grant requests may not exceed \$75,000. Funding priority is given to grantees or partners new to the Act's Grants Program.

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103 East Plumtree Road, Sunderland, MA 01375
(413) 548-8002 x 116
mitch_hartley@fws.gov
<http://www.fws.gov/birdhabitat/Grants/NAWCA/index.shtm>

Statewide

Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) Program

The APR Program is a voluntary program which is intended to offer a non-development alternative to farmers and other owners of "prime" and "state important" agricultural land who are faced with a decision regarding future use and disposition of their farms. Towards this end, the program offers to pay farmers the difference between the "fair market value" and the "agricultural value" of their farmland in exchange for a permanent deed restriction which precludes any use of the property that will have a negative impact on its agricultural viability.

Important considerations by the APR program include:

- 1) The amount of "prime" and "state important" soils on the farm (which is determined by the local National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office)
- 2) The proximity of the property to permanently protected farms
- 3) APR Municipal Grant Program (APR-Muni) which incorporates an initial screen for priority funding for APR acquisitions that considers a town's agricultural resources and economic activity. If a town meets this initial eligibility threshold, then it will be considered for priority allocation of state APR funds. These may include establishing an agricultural commission and enacting a right-to-farm bylaw.

Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
251 Causeway Street, Suite 500, Boston, MA 02114-2151
(617) 626-1720
www.mass.gov/agr/landuse/APR/index.htm

Local contacts:

Rick Chandler
Western Mass. Northern Sector Field Representative
(413) 577-0459
rhandler@umext.umass.edu

Michele Padula
Central Mass. Field Representative
(617) 626-1758
Michele.Padula@state.ma.us

Commonwealth Capital

Massachusetts municipalities must complete a Commonwealth Capital form before they can access some state programs that fund land and water protection, including LAND (formerly Self-Help) Grants and Drinking Water Projection Grants.

Kurt Gaertner, (617) 626-4949.
commcap@massmail.state.ma.us
www.mass.gov/commcap

Community Preservation Act (CPA)

If adopted by a city or town, The Community Preservation Act (CPA) provides new funding sources which can be used to address three core community concerns: 1) acquisition and preservation of open space, 2) creation and support of affordable housing, and 3) acquisition and preservation of historic buildings and landscapes. A minimum of 10% of the annual revenues of the fund must be used for each of the three core community concerns. The remaining 70% can be allocated for any combination of the allowed uses, or for outdoor recreation projects.

The Community Preservation Coalition is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to support efforts to implement the CPA.

Katherine Roth
Community Preservation Coalition
33 Union Street, 4th Floor, Boston, MA 02108
(617) 367-899
katherine.roth@communitypreservation.org
www.communitypreservation.org

Conservation Partnership Program

The Conservation Partnership Program is a grant program that provides reimbursements to non-profit organizations of up to 50% of the cost of acquiring land or interest in land for conservation or outdoor recreation purposes.

Celia Riechel
Conservation Partnership Program
Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services
100 Cambridge Street, 9th Floor, Boston, MA 02114
(617) 626-1187
Celia.riechel@state.ma.us

[www.mass.gov/?pageID=eoeesubtopic&L=4&L0=Home&L1=Grants+%26+Technical+Assistance&L2=Grant+%26+Loan+Programs&L3=Division+of+Conservation+Services+\(DCS\)&sid=Eoeea](http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=eoeesubtopic&L=4&L0=Home&L1=Grants+%26+Technical+Assistance&L2=Grant+%26+Loan+Programs&L3=Division+of+Conservation+Services+(DCS)&sid=Eoeea)

Drinking Water Supply Protection Grant Program

This program provides up to \$500,000 in funds to public water systems and municipalities for land acquisitions that protect public drinking water supplies and drinking water quality. Eligible land acquisitions include land located in existing or future drinking water supply areas. Requires a 50% match. This is a reimbursement program.

Catherine Hamilton
(617) 556-1070
Kathy Romero
(617) 292-5727
Drinking Water Supply Protection Grant Program
Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
1 Winter Street, Boston, MA 02108
www.mass.gov/dep/water/dwgrant.htm

LAND grants (Local Acquisition for Natural diversity) (formerly the Self-Help Grant Program)

The LAND grants help municipal conservation commissions acquire land for natural resource and passive outdoor recreation purposes. Lands acquired may include wildlife, habitat, trails, unique natural, historic or cultural resources, water resources, forest, and farm land. Compatible passive outdoor recreational uses such as hiking, fishing, hunting, cross-country skiing, bird observation and the like are encouraged. Access by the general public is required. This state program pays up to \$500,000 for the acquisition of land, or acquisition of a partial interest in the land (such as a conservation restriction). Depending on the municipality's Commonwealth Capital Score, the town is reimbursed through the program between 52% and 70% of the cost of the land acquisition. Land is owned and managed by the conservation commission. Municipality must have a current Open Space and Recreation Plan and an updated Commonwealth Capital score

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[www.mass.gov/?pageID=eoeaterminal&L=4&L0=Home&L1=Grants+%26+Technical+Assistance&L2=Grant+%26+Loan+Programs&L3=Division+of+Conservation+Services+\(DCS\)&sid=Eoeea&b=terminalcontent&f=ea_dcs_dcs_grant_programs&csid=Eoeea](http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=eoeaterminal&L=4&L0=Home&L1=Grants+%26+Technical+Assistance&L2=Grant+%26+Loan+Programs&L3=Division+of+Conservation+Services+(DCS)&sid=Eoeea&b=terminalcontent&f=ea_dcs_dcs_grant_programs&csid=Eoeea)

Recreational Trails Grant Program

The Recreational Trails Program provides funding for a variety of trail protection, construction, and stewardship projects throughout Massachusetts. This national program makes funds available to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both non-motorized and motorized recreational trail uses.

Recreational Trails grants are 80-20 challenge grants. In other words, 80% of a project can be funded by these grants, but at least 20% of the total project value must come from other sources. A cash match; "in-kind match" in the form of materials, labor, and in-kind services; or a combination of both is permitted. Grant amounts (not including the match) may range from \$2,000 to \$50,000. Requests for amounts greater than \$50,000 will be considered for larger projects with statewide or regional significance.

The program legislation requires that 30% of program funds be reserved for projects related to motorized trail use, 30% for non-motorized projects, and 40% for projects that facilitate diverse trail uses. The Recreational Trails program also requires that projects be primarily recreation- rather than transportation-oriented, and will give priority to projects creating or facilitating physical, on-the-ground trail improvements, which protect or enhance the site's natural and cultural resources, and link individuals and communities to these resources.

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www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/greenway/regionalGrants.htm

Local

New England Grassroots Environmental Fund

The New England Grassroots Environment Fund (NEGEF) is a small grants program designed to foster and give voice to grassroots environmental initiatives in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont. It provides grants of up to \$2,500 to fuel civic engagement, local activism, and social change.

NEGEF funds community involvement in projects that address a wide range of environmental issues including: agriculture, air quality, alternative energy, aquifer protection, biotechnology, community gardens, environmental justice, energy conservation, forestry, global warming, land trusts, marine environment, public health, sprawl, sustainable communities, toxics and hazardous waste, trails, water quality, watershed management, wetlands, wildlife, and youth-organized environmental work.

Ginny Callan, Massachusetts Grant Reviewer
New England Grassroots Environment Fund
PO Box 1057, Montpelier, VT 05601
(802) 223-4622
callan@grassrootsfund.org
www.grassrootsfund.org

OTHER LAND PROTECTION TOOLS

National

LTA Website

The Land Trust Alliance website is a great resource for all things pertaining to land conservation. Landowners, and land conservation trust board members, volunteers and staff will find information about land conservation options and resources helpful. The website is also a good source to find publications pertaining to land conservation.

www.lta.org

Natural Resources Conservation Services Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)

The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) is a voluntary program for people who want to develop and improve wildlife habitat primarily on private land. The USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service provides both technical assistance and up to 75 percent cost-share assistance to establish and improve fish and wildlife habitat. WHIP agreements between NRCS and the participant generally last from 5 to 10 years from the date the agreement is signed. Eligible lands include privately owned land and occasionally state and local government land. Target areas in Massachusetts include early successional habitats (grasslands, shrub habitats, and young forests), freshwater wetlands, upland oak forest, pitch pine/scrub oak habitat, coastal habitats, and rivers and streams.

Rita Thibodeau, Natural Resources Conservation Services
55 Federal St., Greenfield, MA 01301-2546
(413) 772-0384 x 3
rita.thibodeau@ma.usda.gov
www.ma.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/whip.html

Statewide

Agricultural Commissions

Agricultural Commission (AgComs) represents the farming community, encourages the pursuit of agriculture, promotes agriculture-based economic opportunities and works to protect and sustain agricultural businesses and farmland. AgComs are a standing committee of town government, created through a vote at Town Meeting and appointed by the Board of Selectmen or governing body of the town.

Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
251 Causeway Street, Suite 500, Boston, MA 02114
(617) 626-1726
kent.lage@state.ma.us
www.mass.gov/agr/agcom/index.htm

Chapter 61

Land classified with the town Assessor's office as Chapter 61, 61A or 61B brings the benefit of reduced real estate taxes to landowners while maintaining forests, farmland, and recreational open space. If lands under Chapter 61 are to be converted to residential or commercial uses, municipalities have a limited "right of first refusal" during which they can purchase the land or transfer the right to a qualified third party, like a land conservation trust.

Conservation and Land Use Planning under Massachusetts Chapter 61 Laws
Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust
1461 Old Keene Rd, Athol, MA 01331
(978) 248-2118
landtrust@mountgrace.org
www.mountgrace.org/accs/MG-Chptr61final.pdf

Forest Stewardship Program

This educational non-regulatory program is designed to help landowners protect the inherent ecosystem values of their forest. To enroll in the Stewardship Program, a landowner hires a licensed consulting forester to develop a 10-year forest management plan. This Forest Stewardship Plan documents management options and practices designed to maintain the land in a productive and healthy condition for the next generation. Soil and water quality, wildlife and fish habitat, timber and other wood products, and outdoor recreation are among the many factors taken into account. It recommends actions that will protect or increase the environmental values of the land while yielding desired social or economic benefits.

There is no minimum acreage, except that properties of less than 10 acres are not eligible for Forest Stewardship Plan preparation cost-sharing. Participating landowners may own a maximum of 1,000 acres, (or up to 5,000 acres with a special waiver). Municipal governments are also encouraged to develop Stewardship Plans for their Town Forests or Conservation Commission woodlands, and may be eligible for cost-sharing. Landowners of 10 acres or more who do not already have some type of management plan in place for their property are eligible to receive cost-sharing to help pay for the plan development.

Contact your local Department of Conservation and Recreation Service Forester:
(800) 783-2311

www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/forestry/service/steward.htm

Landowner Incentive Program

In 2004, MassWildlife's initiated the [Landowner Incentive Program \(LIP\)](#) to engage private landowners in active wildlife habitat enhancement with funding from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. LIP is a cost sharing partnership that provides financial and technical assistance to private landowners interested in developing and maintaining wildlife habitat on their property. To date, 68 projects from conservation organizations, sportsmen's clubs and individual landowners across the state have received LIP funding. Through these programs, MassWildlife has partnered with state and federal agencies, conservation organizations, sports clubs, land trusts and other natural resource entities in an effort to maintain, restore or enhance wildlife habitat for the benefit of wildlife and the enjoyment of the Bay State's citizens.

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1 Rabbit Hill Rd, Westborough, MA 01581
(508) 389-6387
tracy.grazia@state.ma.us
www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/habitat/grants/lip/lip_home.htm

Massachusetts Woodlands Cooperative

Massachusetts Woodlands Cooperative is a forest landowner management, processing and marketing cooperative organized by and on behalf of forest landowners in western Massachusetts. The mission of the Cooperative is to maintain the environment and character of western Massachusetts through the protection, enhancement and careful economic development of one of the region's most plentiful resources, the forest. The work of the cooperative is based on specific values, guided by clear principles, and directed toward business goals identified and supported by its membership.

The Cooperative is “green certified” under the group certification process provided by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). Green certification is similar to organic labeling of produce. It is an independent assessment of forestry practices to determine if the management is sustainable. Green certification allows the Cooperative to sell forest products with a label showing that these products are from an environmentally friendly operation.

Susan Campbell
The Massachusetts Woodlands Cooperative
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(413) 397-8800
susan@masswoodlands.coop
www.masswoodlands.coop

Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition

An informal association of land trust and conservation organizations, the Coalition's website provides information on local land protection resource centers, lists of appraisers and conservation law attorneys, as well as updates on land conservation conferences, legislation, and trainings.

Bernie McHugh
Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition
18 Wolbach Rd., Sudbury, MA 01776
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bmchugh@massland.org
www.massland.org

MassGIS Dataviewer: OLIVER

OLIVER is MassGIS's OnLine data ViewER. OLIVER allows you to browse, view and download any layer which MassGIS has available for public distribution. This includes close to 200 datasets styled into almost 1,000 themes, including topographic maps, aerial photos, and conserve open space for your community.

maps.massgis.state.ma.us/massgis_viewer/index.htm

www.mass.gov/mgis/mapping.htm

MassWoods Forest Conservation Program

MassWoods is a web-based resource for landowners looking for information on licensed foresters, selling timber, estate planning, Chapter 61, and land protection. The goal of MassWoods is to provide accurate information to woodland owners when they need to make two critical decisions about the future of their land: 1) the potential sale of timber and 2) planning for the future of the property.

MassWoods features an interactive map to direct landowners to local resources for help and assistance. Service foresters, local land trusts, statewide land trusts and conservation organizations are all listed for each town across the state. Each month a new update will be posted aimed at delivering timely and relevant information about landowner decisions, issues, programs, opportunities and successes.

In addition, MassWoods encourages landowners to consider the role their properties plays in their landscape and communities as they make decision about their land. Likewise, MassWoods encourages community members and municipal officials to value private woodland owners for the many public benefits they provide to the community.

www.masswoods.net

Massachusetts Registry of Deeds

Find land ownership information in Massachusetts communities at www.sec.state.ma.us/rod/rodidx.htm

TownBoard

TownBoard is the one-stop calendar site for Massachusetts town boards. This site provides each of the Commonwealth's 351 cities and towns with up-to-date information on relevant training and educational opportunities in the state and region – particularly on land-use issues.

www.Townboard.org