



MASSLAND E-NEWS

The Newsletter of the Massachusetts Land Conservation Community

January 5, 2010

Volume 10, Number 01

Items of interest to the Massachusetts land protection community.

For more news and information, got to <http://www.MassLand.org>

Please send items of interest to Info@MassLand.org

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"All technology should be assumed guilty until proven innocent."

-- David Ross Brower (1912 - 2000), environmentalist, founder of Sierra Club Foundation, Friends of the Earth, League of Conservation Voters, Earth Island Institute, first Executive Director of the Sierra Club, quoted in the Los Angeles Times (1992) --

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Thank you for subscribing to MassLand E-News.

Please forward this to friends, family and colleagues who are interested in Massachusetts land conservation issues and encourage them to subscribe.

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A Note from the Editor:

I've only made ONE resolution for the New Year - to get the MassLand E-News out more often and more regularly. I'm counting on all of you to help me fulfill it.

Bernie McHugh, Editor

MLTC News

1) MLTC IS HIRING! OUTREACH & COMMUNICATIONS ADMINISTRATOR

The Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition seeks an experienced individual with a passion for land conservation to implement its new training program, handle communications with its membership and conduct outreach activities to partners and providers.

The Outreach and Training Administrator will:

- * Establish and maintain a network of service providers who work with the land conservation community.
- * Assist in developing and scheduling workshops and materials for regional trainings.
- * Manage the www.MassLand.org website, including finding and posting materials for the resource library.
- * Assist with other communications, including compiling and editing the MassLand E-News

This position requires:

- * The ability to communicate the organization's mission and goals to others
- * The ability to work independently
- * Excellent project organization and follow-through skills
- * Excellent inter-personal and relationship management skills
- * High degree of familiarity and comfort with online technology

Work with land conservation leaders for one of the most respected and effective land conservation service organizations in the nation. This is a half-time (20 hours per week) contract position with flexible hours, and will include some travel within Massachusetts, so a valid driver's license and access to a vehicle is required. You may work at home, at our office in Sudbury, or a combination. A computer will be supplied. Annual compensation to \$22,000, no benefits.

Please submit a resume and cover letter saying why you are excited about this position and why we should be excited about you. Send email to: kmcgrath@massland.org or regular mail to Mass Land Trust Coalition, Attn Kathy McGrath, 18 Wolbach Road, Sudbury, MA 01776

Deadline for applications February 15th, 2010

No phone calls, please and no inquiries from employment, referral or placement agencies.

2) MLTC & RELIGIOUS LANDS IN THE WASHINGTON POST

Shrinking Religious Orders Take Up Land Conservation

- from The Washington Post - by Bridget MacDonald - January 2, 2010

Looking over the wooded parcel her Catholic order sold in 1992, Sister Chris Loughlin stood with arms folded, the regret on her face plain to see.

But Loughlin and her fellow Dominican sisters in Plainville, Mass., about 30 miles southwest of Boston, have more than made up for the loss of 10 acres from the former orchard that was bequeathed to the order in 1949.

Gesturing to surrounding fields and forests, Loughlin explained: "Now we have these 42 acres, and 32 of them are in a conservation restriction. So no matter what happens at this point, at least the land is preserved."

The old orchard is now home to the Crystal Springs Earth Learning Center, and the rambling farmhouse is the unassuming headquarters of a remarkable land conservation initiative, the Religious Lands Conservancy.

Launched by Loughlin in 2002 with the Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition, the Religious Lands Conservancy has been instrumental in placing hundreds of acres owned by religious communities into conservation. With a faith-based mission to protect the Earth, Loughlin has approached congregations throughout the Northeast to broach the spiritual value of conservation.

It's not just a feel-good spiritual mission. During the past 40 years, the number of Catholic nuns has plummeted 66 percent, and the number of Catholic brothers by 60 percent. The financial strain of dwindling membership has resulted in lucrative -- and often attractive -- offers to sell the orders' land to developers.

Loughlin said that although religious orders are fading, their land could yet be a lasting legacy.

She is among a growing network of Catholic sisters who have reexamined their connection to the Earth in the context of their faith. Mary Evelyn Tucker, a professor of environmental and religious studies at Yale University, said the increasing involvement of religious groups in preservation is not simply a trend but also "the rediscovery of ancient traditions."

"All the rituals of world religions are very much nature-based," she said.

The green-sister revolution is rooted in the teachings of the Rev. Thomas Berry, who before his death in June fostered the idea that the environmental crisis must also be understood as a spiritual crisis. Sister Miriam MacGillis, a Dominican nun who has been at the forefront of the movement, said Berry's perspective shifted her work "quite radically" to encompass a respect for all life on Earth.

Ever since MacGillis helped found the 226-acre Genesis Farm and its Earth studies center in Blairstown, N.J., in 1980, Catholic sisters across the United States and Canada have woven environmental justice and community-supported agriculture into their religious vocation.

Living in Massachusetts -- the nation's third-most densely populated state -- the Dominican sisters of Plainville are helping to save a critical habitat, said Bob Wilber, director of land protection for the Massachusetts Audubon Society, and their foresight has helped spark conversations with other orders.

"Some of the most significant land left [in Massachusetts] is owned by religious entities," Wilber said.

As religious orders took root across the United States in the 19th century, they built networks of schools, hospitals and orphanages to provide services to the poor and marginalized. The rise of government and private programs, however, made many of these institutions obsolete.

In the mid-1970s, the sisters in Plainville confronted an increasingly familiar situation: Fewer students were enrolling in their parochial school, and shrinking numbers of sisters meant having to hire (and pay) lay teachers.

"We converted that school building into a home for our retired sisters," Loughlin said.

In a scenario faced by many Catholic orders, the cash-strapped sisters began to sell off pieces of property to help pay for the care of elderly members. In similar situations, land that was once eyed for a cemetery was split into subdivisions, and shuttered churches have been converted to condominiums.

Kathy McGrath of the Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition said many religious groups are starting to see that the benefits of protecting land often outweighs the costs, although some still need convincing.

"It's so important," McGrath said, "to have someone like Chris who is connected to . . ."

"Old nuns," Loughlin interjected from across the table.

About 60 miles to the southeast, at the gateway to Cape Cod, the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary has run a retreat center on 118 acres of waterfront property in Buzzards Bay since 1943.

Waterfront land in the area has skyrocketed in value, and the congregation has had many offers to sell. Yet the Rev. Stanley Kolasa, the center's director, explained that "we realized that this is a gift -- this is a gifted place. We want in some way to return the gift."

With financial uncertainties prompting difficult questions, members of the congregation looked for answers at the Religious Lands Conservancy's 2005 conference. Mass Audubon joined the conversation, and the land soon became a top priority for the state's Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program.

"It blossomed into a contiguous 300 acres on the ocean," said Mass Audubon's Wilber. "It's probably the last time this will ever happen with land fronting on the water."

Download the article at the Washington Post:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/01/01/AR2010010101586.html>

Action Alerts

3) PUBLIC LANDS PROTECTION ACT ("NO-NET-LOSS") NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT!

The hearing on the Public Lands Preservation Act (PLPA; H. 3438; aka Article 97 Bill, aka No-net-loss Bill) was held before the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources, and Agriculture on December 15th.

The bill sponsors, Rep. Balsler and Sen. Eldridge testified in favor as did former Sen. Resor, who had championed the bill for years. The administration also supported the bill.

It is not too late to send in testimony, if you have not done so already. Please write to:

The Honorable Anthony W. Petrucci
The Honorable William M. Strauss
Joint Committee on Environment Natural Resources, and Agriculture
State House, Room 473-F
Boston, MA 02133
or email to <mailto:Rep.WilliamStraus@Hou.State.MA.US>

For info on the PLPA and sample letters go to <http://www.protectmassenvironment.org/> then click on "Public Lands Pres. Act."

(Ed. note: the Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition would like to thank Phil Saunders of "Protect Mass. Environment" and former Senator Pamela Resor for their tireless advocacy on this important legislation.)

News

4) GOV. PATRICK: BIGGER BACKYARD NO REASON FOR 'PRECIOUS' LAND TRANSFER

- from State House New Service, November 21, 2009

Gov. Deval Patrick has vetoed legislation that he says would convey precious state-owned parkland to an abutter of Borderland State Park in Sharon "to expand their private backyard," but a top state lawmaker says the bill fairly addresses a grievance emanating from the family that sold the land to create the park in the first place.

In a message to lawmakers accompanying his Tuesday veto of the bill (H 4357), Patrick wrote: "I am reluctant to establish a precedent that authorizes abutters to state conservation land to carve out new boundaries for their private benefit, without any exceptional circumstances." Patrick said the conveyance "seems in direct conflict" with the state constitution and asserted that if the policy were applied to abutters along 2,400 miles of Department of Conservation and Recreation boundary lines, the state would lose significant amounts of wildlife habitat and land set aside for recreation.

The House and Senate, on the final day of formal sessions for 2009 last Wednesday, rushed the bill through all of its readings and to Patrick's desk. Rep. Steven Walsh (D-Lynn), co-chairman of the Legislature's State Administration and Regulatory Oversight Committee, which reviewed the bill, said the legislation conveys 36,000 square feet of land to the landowner to create a buffer between his home and a portion of the park, but that the owner, under the bill, conveys more than 40,000 square feet of land to the state, with an agreement that if an appraisal deems the land values in his favor the difference will be deposited into the state's General Fund.

Walsh said the landowner's family sold 170 acres to the state in 1985 and the conveyance authorized under the bill will increase park frontage and public access. "This family actually helped to create the park," Walsh said. "He's looking to get back some of that land that he sold. What we did in the bill was we addressed a grievance to a taxpayer and we did it in a way that protects the state." Walsh said he intended to discuss the bill with administration officials and talk to legislative leaders about an override attempt.

Rep. Louis Kafka (D-Stoughton) said the late Robert Morse, whose daughter and son-in-law would be affected by the conveyance, sold the land to the state in 1985. "The extenuating circumstances in my opinion would be the fact that if the family didn't enter into an agreement back in 1985 (the state) wouldn't have the land in the first place," Kafka said. He planned to wait until after Thursday's holiday to call the family and tell them about the veto. "I'm not going to ruin their Thanksgiving," Kafka said.

5) NEWS ARTICLES ON THREATS TO MASS. ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

- from Mass Audubon's Beacon Hill Weekly Roundup by Jack Clarke, Director of Public Policy & Government Relations; Jennifer Ryan, Legislative Director; Christina McDermott, Assistant to the Director

Valley Advocate writer Maureen Turner investigates the bill that would limit the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program's ability to review and permit development threatening vulnerable plant and animal populations and habitats. An Act Designating Natural Heritage Functions of the Department of Fisheries, Wildlife and Environmental Law Enforcement (H.4167 - [click here for text](#)):

<http://www.mass.gov/legis/bills/house/186/ht04/ht04167.htm>) effectively guts the authority of Massachusetts' Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act. The article delves into the arguments surrounding this controversial legislation:
<http://www.valleyadvocate.com/article.cfm?aid=10912>

A supplementary article by Turner profiles Bill Pepin, a property owner, political donor, and the general manager and vice president of WWLP, Springfield's top-rated news channel. Pepin was particularly influential in the filing of H. 4167: <http://www.valleyadvocate.com/article.cfm?aid=10916>

(Ed. note: MLTC strongly opposes this legislation and Coordinator Bernie McHugh testified against it before the Joint Committee on Environment Natural Resources, and Agriculture hearing)

6) CHANGES TO MASS. LOBBY LAW COULD AFFECT YOU!

- from Mass Audubon's Beacon Hill Weekly Roundup by Jack Clarke, Director of Public Policy & Government Relations; Jennifer Ryan, Legislative Director; Christina McDermott, Assistant to the Director

Beginning January 1, 2010, a new statute that governs lobbying will go into effect in Massachusetts. Based on the new more narrowly defined law, it is likely that some individuals that were exempt will now have to register. Previously, there was a 50 hour/\$5,000 per six month period allowance before you had to register. The new law drops the thresholds to 25 hours/\$2,500 per six month reporting period. We suggest that organizations review the new statute and guidance from the Secretary of State and determine if staff will need to register. This statute only pertains to individuals who are paid by their organization and lobby town officials on state issues, legislators, or members of the executive branch. It does not apply to federal lobbying.

- From David P. Magnani, Ed.D., Executive Director, Massachusetts Nonprofit Network
(<http://www.massnonprofitnet.org/>)

Dear Nonprofit Friends,

As you know, Chapter 28, the new Ethics, Campaign Finance and Lobbying Law will take effect on Jan 1st, 2010. In spite of heroic efforts on the part of many, if no changes occur before then, it will take effect "as is" on that date. For those of you who know that you will meet the threshold for registering as a lobbyist, (for example, those who met the registration thresholds under the past law and who will remain equally active) registration was, as you know, to occur before Dec. 15th. While it is still possible that some changes in the law might occur before Jan 1st, such changes would be modest and further changes may be warranted after the 1st. Efforts on our part and that of many in our coalition will continue and MNN will continue to keep you informed of any changes or efforts in that regard. However, the Secretary of State's Office has indicated at a session at Suffolk Law School, that "if you are in doubt, register." To do so, go to the Secretary of State's website (www.sec.state.ma.us/lobbyist). There you will find the new law and a flow chart indicating whether you might be required to register. If you believe you will meet the new guidelines in 2010 you should register. Also, Pam Wilmot of Common Cause, who, along with others, was involved in drafting the law, has kindly offered to provide her most recent "best estimate clarifications" of the requirements under the new law and she is expected to issue such a memo by end of business on Wednesday the 6th. She cautions that these will be suggestive only, and not official advisory opinions, which can only be given by the Secretary of State and generally, when they are given, would be in response to written requests. Her past memo in this regard is below. Thanks for staying with us on this. We know the situation is not ideal and we will continue our efforts to ameliorate it. In that regard, you may be called on to contact your legislators and the Governor's office when the time comes.

- Dave Magnani

H. 3853 An Act to Improve the Laws Relating to Ethics and Lobbying Overview:

Filed by the Governor to address some of the situations to address ethics and lobbying in government. Now filed as amended and extended by House, includes campaign finance. The measure is expected to be brought

before in the Senate in early May. Creates higher fines for violations - up to 10k per violation. Adds new subpoena and civil enforcement powers to Attorney General and Secretary of State. Doubles the number of lobbying reports that need to be filed - will have to file a report every 3 months. Cuts in half the hours that an individual can lobby before having to become a registered lobbyist. Raises the lobbyist registration fee from \$100/year to \$1,000 per year. Defines lobbying much more broadly and includes not just time spent contacting legislators, but all the strategy and preparation time as well. Requires much more detail for each report including each bill hours spent in lobbying according to this new definition, position on the bill, who was contacted and how, etc. MNN would like to see nonprofits exempt from this provision as they are already regulated by the federal government.

Wildlife News

7) DFG PROTECTS OVER 10,000 ACRES OF WILDLIFE LAND IN FY 09

Over 10,280 acres of fish and wildlife habitat in 42 towns were protected for wildlife and the public by the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MassWildlife) in the past fiscal year (July 1, 2008 - June 30, 2009). Key wildlife habitats protected through the efforts of MassWildlife and DFG realty staff ranged from 1-acre acquisitions in Pepperell on the Nissitissit River and in Montague on the Saw Mill River to the 4,300-acre conservation easement in Fall River which is held jointly by DFW and the Department of Conservation and Recreation.

These wildlife lands will be added to the list of over 170,000 acres currently under the care and control of MassWildlife, most of which are Wildlife Management Areas (WMA). Most properties this year were purchased outright (in fee), however from an acreage perspective, approximately 75% of lands protected in FY 09 were via conservation easements that restrict development and allow public access for wildlife-related recreation but still leave the land in the hands of the original owner. All lands protected are open to fishing, hunting, trapping, wildlife observation, boating, hiking, and other wildlife-related recreation. A listing of the FY 2009 properties by town can be found at www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/habitat/land/land_acquisitions.htm

“Wildlife Conservation Easements (WCE) played a major role in our land protection efforts in the eastern and central part of the state,” said Bill Minior, recently retired Chief of Wildlife Lands. “Although WCEs accounted for only 12 of our 56 projects, they included over three quarters of the total acreage protected.” Municipalities were the grantors of about 75% of the total conservation easement acreage protected. Minior noted that the driving factors behind this municipal activity appears to have been the need for funding coupled with the desire to preserve open space for resource protection and recreational needs.

Several notable properties acquired include a 248-acre tract in the Western District that more than doubled the size of the agency’s Hawley Herp Preserve and was the largest parcel acquired in fee this year. Additionally, a 17-acre parcel acquired in Dalton includes approximately one quarter mile of Housatonic River frontage as well as an attractive log cabin style office building which now houses the Western District office. In the Connecticut Valley District, the agency was able to add 174 acres to the Montague WMA. Also in Montague, a key 1-acre public access parcel of riverfront land was acquired on the Sawmill River. In the Central District, a new 498-acre Nineteenth Hill WCE in Winchendon was acquired from the Town of Winchendon, and a new 564-acre Wekepeke WCE located in Sterling and Leominster was acquired from the Town of Clinton. In the Northeast District, the Shirley Rod and Gun club conveyed a 146 acre WCE which adds substantially to agency holdings in that area. A new WMA - the Townsend Hill WMA - was created by combining two abutting acquisitions in Townsend and Pepperell. Last but not least, in the Southeast District, the town of Fall River conveyed the 4,300-acre Fall River Wildlife Conservation Easement (WCE), which is held jointly with DCR. Perhaps the most notable acquisition is the 158-acre AD Makepeace (ADM) transaction in Plymouth and Wareham. It created two new WMAs, Halfway Pond and Maple Springs, but more importantly paved the way for future protection of thousands of acres of ADM

property. Much of this property is considered by MassWildlife's Natural Heritage Program to be some of the most valuable rare and endangered species habitat in the eastern part of the state. This complex project involves the ADM Co., local municipalities, non-profits/land trusts and the Commonwealth, and under options will span several decades.

"The AD Makepeace project is our biggest conservation deal in decades. The amount of land we're talking about protecting in that area over time is tremendous," said DFG Commissioner Mary Griffin. "Coupled with the other land protection projects our staff completed, it is certainly the most successful year our department has had in quite some time."

8) MLTC IS FOUNDING MEMBER OF NEW CLIMATE & WILDLIFE ALLIANCE

Following a climate change conference held last year at Bentley University, a new collaborative group focusing on global warming's impact on wildlife was formed. The Climate Change and Wildlife Alliance - Massachusetts, of which the Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition is a founding member, is working closely with the Department of Fish and Game and the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife to coordinate protection efforts. The Alliance aims to: advocate for science-based adaptation strategies for ecosystem conservation; aid in the distribution of climate-related impact and adaptation information; and enhance planning, policy, and funding for wildlife resiliency.

Visit www.climateandwildlife.org to learn more.

Other founding members include Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences, Environmental League of Massachusetts, Mass Audubon, New England Wild Flower Society, The National Wildlife Federation, The Nature Conservancy of Massachusetts, and The Trustees of Reservations.

Editorials & Op Eds

9) "STREAMLINING" MAY HAVE MERIT, BUT BEWARE OF RAILROADING

- Op-Ed from the Daily Hampshire Gazette, December 2, 2009 by Alexandra Dawson

Citizens' rights, home rule and environmental protection are being washed away by a wave of "streamlining." The state describes streamlining as simplifying permit reviews in order to reduce redundancy, save time and, increasingly, save state money. Current financial crises and the need to shift to cleaner energy sources give streamlining credibility.

But behind this worthy endeavor is another agenda, one not so benign. The present administration wants us to get aboard its train - and shut up.

Prime example: Energy projects. Secretary Ian Bowles of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) has clearly been told not to require any environmental impact reports on energy projects under the MEPA law. MEPA is a disclosure law; it does not stop anything. But it does get the facts and figures out to the public.

Right now, the state Department of Environmental Protection is finalizing permits for two and a half (see below) forest-wood burning biomass plants while a study of available wood will not come out till May. Application of the MEPA law would prevent nonsense like this. Meantime, the administration has brought on the queen of one-stop-shop permit laws to allow the Energy Facilities Siting Board (EFSB) to give out permits for inland wind farms even though most of the wind is out to sea. This priceless piece of prose would substitute the EFSB for the wetlands act, rare species law and all local protections and, best of all, ban almost all court appeals - except, of course, for the proponents who can appeal like crazy though it is unclear why they would ever need to.

The committee to work out substitute environmental protection standards for the board contains not one soul who knows one end of the wetlands regulations from the other.

Meanwhile, a private firm is about to get licensed to build the first plant in Massachusetts permitted to burn construction and demolition (C&D) debris, which contains lots of arsenic (decks) and mercury and lead (paint). The proponent has a wonderful new system for burning these toxic metals and let us all hope it works because no one will ever tell us if it does not. The magic depends upon careful sorting of the contaminated fuel by a bunch of firms that chip wood for burning, principally using the "kick-sort" method of selecting appropriate wood samples. That's when the dozers dump the stuff on the floor and the employees kick it to make sure no metal stuff ruins their chipper. The only test done by the chosen chipper using "positive picking" (sorting contaminated wood on a conveyor belt) failed, but never mind, DEP will rely on the burning technology even though it told the MEPA office it would require positive picking (That's when they got their pass on an environmental impact report). Pattern here? We stand to get construction and demolition debris from New Hampshire (which banned the burning) and even from Maine, which used to get our stuff, so you can count on getting a nice flock of these plants in our hayseed purlieus.

The administration would like to streamline the endangered species program altogether, but since it gets no state funding, they cannot just starve it to death. Wetlands review is the obvious next candidate for simplification. Fortunately, though, there is a problem: The law is primarily administered by 351 local Conservation Commissions; half the towns in the state have in addition passed local wetlands bylaws. Hence the possible need for the wind siting approach - just bypass these laws altogether whenever you want to do something Really Important. The model here is the 40B housing, which bypasses local zoning and wetlands bylaws to create affordable housing in communities short on it. But even that effort spared the state wetlands act, the oldest in the country. Developers can hardly hope to get a pass like this for every development. The DEP recently tried to streamline streams by taking all the water out them (that didn't swim well) and the Department of Conservation & Recreation is mounting a parallel campaign against the trees in our public forests.

The state Legislature has been remarkably silent on streamlining, perhaps because it has its own problems with our environmental laws. Clever up, lads. What is done to one group will eventually be done to all groups. And if the DEP stops taking appeals from local wetlands decisions (one of the current streamlining suggestions) how much fun is that going to be for developers faced with 351 peevish and disgruntled Conservation Commissions?

According to Mass Audubon, the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and all the environmental agencies under it consume only .07 (that's seven-tenths of one percent) of the state operating budget. Over the last decade, these agencies have repeatedly lost more staff and budget than other branches of the government. The office and its predecessor have been overly polite in conceding to these losses. Further cuts in these small agencies will imperil environmental protection without saving significant state money.

Alexandra Dawson lives in Hadley and writes a monthly column for the Hampshire Daily Gazette on environmental and conservation issues.

Public Hearings

10) DCR PUBLIC FORUMS TO DISCUSS FOREST STEWARDSHIP RECOMMENDATIONS

Keeping to Governor Patrick's commitment to civic engagement, the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) is sponsoring five public forums in February to discuss draft recommendations on the future stewardship and management of forest lands within the Massachusetts state parks system.

DCR began the Forest Futures Visioning Process last spring to determine how best to manage the myriad public benefits and values of forest land within the agency's parks system, including recreation, tourism, aesthetics, renewable forest products, habitat diversity, and landscape ecology, and how to strike the appropriate balance among them.

The process has several components, including the formation of an advisory group of stakeholders and the Technical Steering Committee. The Technical Steering Committee, which includes academics, practitioners, and scientists, is developing the draft recommendations with input from the public and the stakeholders.

"We are committed to having an open, wide-ranging, public conversation about forests in Massachusetts," said DCR Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr. "We had three public forums and forest tours over the summer, and we look forward to the Technical Steering Committee's recommendations and hearing public comment."

DCR contracted with the Massachusetts Office of Dispute Resolution & Public Collaboration (MODR) at the University of Massachusetts in Boston to develop a design for the public process, act as facilitators throughout its implementation, and ensure that the discussion and processes are unbiased.

The upcoming public forums will be at the following dates, times, and locations:

Thursday, February 4, 2010

6:30 - 8:30 pm Westborough Public Library 55 West Main Street, Westborough (Snow date: Tuesday, February 16)

Saturday, February 6, 2010

10 am - Noon North Adams Public Library 74 Church Street, North Adams (Snow date: Saturday, February 13)

Saturday, February 6, 2010

2 pm - 4 pm Berkshire Community College - Melville Hall Room 201 1350 West Street, Pittsfield (Snow date: Saturday, February 13)

Tuesday, February 9, 2010

5 pm - 7 pm Jones Library 43 Amity Street, Amherst

Thursday, February 11, 2010

5 pm - 7 pm Taunton Public Library 12 Pleasant Street, Taunton (Snow date: Thursday, February 18)

The Technical Steering Committee is composed of 11 individuals who have a high level of expertise in the issues, trends, and best practices of forest conservation and ecology, landscape ecology, natural resource economics and law, recreation, silviculture, aesthetics, watersheds, and wildlife habitat.

The draft recommendations will be posted soon on the DCR website, www.mass.gov/dcr. The public is encouraged to review the recommendations and comment on them by email to MODRDCRFFVP@umb.edu. The Technical Steering Committee is expected to make its final recommendations to DCR in late winter 2010.

For more information on this public process, visit www.mass.gov/dcr

Calls for Proposals

11) NEAFWA CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS, APRIL 27 CONFERENCE

66th Annual Northeast Fish and Wildlife Conference
Sunday, April 25 - Tuesday, April 27, 2010
Newton, Massachusetts - Marriott Boston Newton

The Northeast Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (NEAFWA) is comprised of 21 northeastern state and Canadian provincial fisheries and wildlife agencies. The Annual Conference attracts over 500 natural resource professionals in the fields of wildlife biology, fisheries and fisheries management, information and education, licensing and administration, law enforcement, conservation engineering, and geographic information systems specialists.

Conference Theme

Climate Change and Wildlife Conservation - Adaptation and Mitigation

To advance the understanding of global climate change impacts to Northeast ecosystems; to develop adaptation strategies for fisheries and wildlife conservation; and to respond to the challenges and opportunities offered by mitigation measures.

There are 10 conference tracks for the 66th Annual Northeast Fish and Wildlife Conference. You are invited to share your research and / or management experiences in these areas at the conference. Presentations related to climate change in any of the tracks are particularly encouraged.

Contact information for each of the track Chairs is listed below. Please contact them if you have any questions or would like to discuss any thoughts or ideas regarding your presentation.

CONFERENCE TRACKS & CHAIRS

Conservation and Engineering

Terry Smith (617) 727-1843, terrance.smith@state.ma.us

Fish Production

Ken Simmons (508) 389-6332, ken.simmons@state.ma.us

Freshwater Fisheries

Caleb Slater (508) 389-6331, caleb.slater@state.ma.us

Geographic Information Systems

Dave Szczebak (508) 389-6353, dave.szczebak@state.ma.us

Habitat Management

John O'Leary (508) 389-6359, john.oleary@state.ma.us

Information, Education, and Outreach

Ellie Horwitz (508) 389-6305, ellie.horwitz@state.ma.us

Licensing

Rick Kennedy (617) 626-1613, rick.kennedy@state.ma.us

Marine Fisheries

Michael Armstrong (978) 282-0308 x 109, michael.armstrong@state.ma.us

Wildlife (including non-game)

Tom O'Shea (508) 389-6327, tom.o'shea@state.ma.us

You may submit one of the following formats:

20 minute presentation to be combined with other like topics
Panel presentation for 1.5 hours that you develop and coordinate
1.5 hour workshop or symposium on a specific topic
Poster display

Abstracts will only be accepted online. Applications and criteria are available at:

<https://guest.event.com/EVENTS/Register/IdentityConfirmation.aspx?e=10df2db8-f2b3-4ab7-8844-55b505cb329a>

The deadline for submissions is January 15, 2010.

Events

12) **SAVE THE DATE: WILDLIFE & CLIMATE CHANGE II**

Save the date for a special conference

Responding to Climate Change II: Tools and Solutions for Safeguarding Wildlife and Habitats

Monday, April 26, 2010, 1:00 to 5:00 PM

A follow-on to the 2008 "Bentley Conference"

Responding to Climate Change: Working Together to Conserve Land, Wildlife and Habitat

Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences (Manomet) and the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife are presenting a half-day event as follow-on to the groundbreaking conference held at Bentley College in November 2008.

The event is being held as part of the 66th Annual Northeast Fish and Wildlife Conference. It will take place at the Boston Marriott Newton in Newton, Massachusetts.

Come learn about what the Climate Change and Wildlife Alliance-Massachusetts (Alliance) has been accomplishing since the groundbreaking conference. Alliance partners will fill you in on the progress made and share ways to manage climate change as it pertains to your organization.

The 10 Alliance organizations include: Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences, the Environmental League of Massachusetts, Massachusetts Audubon, Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game, Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition, New England Wild Flower Society, The National Wildlife Federation, The Nature Conservancy, and The Trustees of Reservations.

Registration will soon be available at: www.climateandwildlife.org. Stay tuned for a registration notice and more information!

13) **SOUTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS LAND TRUST CONVOCATION, BOURNE**

Southeastern Massachusetts Land Trust Convocation*

Canal Club Facility, Trowbridge Rd off Bourne Bridge Rotary,
Best Western Motel, Bourne

Saturday, February 6, 2010

8:30 am to Noon

Please join your fellow conservation professionals, volunteers, and board members for a morning of topical workshops.

Come hear local and state experts about:

recent MA property tax cases & how they might affect your land trust's property tax exemption status
federal, state and private grant opportunities for land acquisition & habitat restoration
the art of successfully negotiating a land transaction
land management issues from land steward professionals and volunteers

Co-sponsored by Coalition for Buzzards Bay, The Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts, and the Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition

To register, contact the Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts at compact@cape.com

14) 2010 ELA CONFERENCE & ECO-MARKETPLACE

Expanding the Ecological Landscape
Keynote Speaker Toby Hemenway
February 25, 2010
MassMutual Center, Springfield, MA

Learn how to maximize biological potential, minimize environmental impacts, and obtain spectacular results at this one-day conference. Seventeen sessions offer multiple tracks focused on water use, landscape design, pest control, and application of practical skills. Experienced educators and practitioners provide sessions covering many aspects of ecological, sustainable, and organic landscaping (CEUs available). The concurrent Eco-Marketplace presents opportunities to explore new options in landscaping products and services.

Dinner features a keynote address by Toby Hemenway, author of *Gaia's Garden*, a Guide to Home-scale Permaculture. Adjunct professor at Portland State University and Scholar in Residence at Pacific University, Hemenway will share his design approach based on ecological principles that create sustainable landscapes, homes, and workplaces.

Full brochure and online registration available at www.ecolandscaping.org or call 617-436-5838 (attendees). Exhibitors please contact Trevor Smith at 617-308-7063.

Training

15) KEYSTONE PROJECT ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR APRIL TRAINING

The Keystone Project (formerly Coverts) invests education and reference materials in important, keystone people, those in a position to influence forest conservation decisions. In return for the 3-day training and take-home resources, graduates of the program, called Keystone Cooperators, agree to return to their communities and advance forest conservation through a project of their choosing. This year's training will be held April 15th - 18th, 2010 at the Harvard Forest in Petersham. The Keystone Project is a competitive program. Applicants can either own forestland, be involved in the care and stewardship of a property, or be an involved community leader. This year we are particularly interested in applications from municipal officials.

Applications are due March 1, 2010. Learn more about the program and download an application at: <http://masskeystone.net/trainings/index.html>

Grants

16) CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP GRANTS 2ND ROUND NOW OPEN!!!

Application deadline: March 1, 2010, 3 pm

Subject to 815 CMR 2.00, the Conservation Partnership Program assists non-public, not-for-profit corporations in acquiring interests in lands suitable for conservation or recreation purposes. Grants provide funding to assist non-public, not-for-profit corporations in acquiring interests in lands suitable for conservation or recreation purposes.

The Act requires that all selected Applicants convey an appropriate perpetual conservation restriction, within the meaning of sections 31 and 32 of Chapter 184 of the General Laws, to either the city or town in which the selected project is located, to be managed by either its conservation or recreation commission, or a state agency, or both. The Act also requires that all projects provide appropriate public access, as determined by the Secretary.

Application is available on Comm-Pass <http://www.comm-pass.com/> and will soon be available on the EEA website <<http://www.mass.gov/eea/dcs>> .

Contact: Celia Riechel, 617-626-1187 or celia.riechel@state.ma.us

17) WILLIAM P. WHARTON TRUST PRELIMINARY PROPOSALS DUE MARCH 1

The William P. Wharton Trust, which is administered by the Trustees at the law firm of Choate Hall & Stewart LLP in Boston, Massachusetts, makes grants to organizations as described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

The Trust supports projects that directly promote the conservation, study, and appreciation of nature, including

- 1) Natural areas preservation, primarily in Massachusetts and New England, including funding acquisitions of land for conservation purposes,
- 2) Management techniques designed to improve environmental quality and species diversity,
- 3) Bird and forestry research and management, especially at the applied level rather than the theoretical or molecular level, and
- 4) Creation of materials or projects designed to foster an appreciation of and a concern for wildlife and natural systems.

Preliminary applications are due March 1, 2010.

For more information, see: <http://www.willampwhartontrust.org/>

18) NEGEF SMALL GRANTS PROGRAMS

New England Grassroots Environmental Fund's (NEGEF) small grants program provides grants to groups working on community level issues in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island. The Fund interprets the word 'environment' broadly and will provide funding for a wide range of activities. Whole systems-thinking is critical to initiatives focused on making our environment better, healthier and more sustainable. Small grants are intended to support community groups who represent the most exciting

energy in the environmental movement that are not being reached by traditional funders. **The next deadline is February 15, 2010.** See: http://grassrootsfund.org/grants/small_grants/

19) DCR PARTNERSHIP MATCHING FUNDS PROGRAM

Applications are now available for DCR's Partnerships matching Funds Program. A funding program geared towards providing financial assistance to partners to promote the stewardship of DCR facilities. **Applications are due on January 15th, 2010.**

More info can be found at: http://www.mass.gov/dcr/partner/partnerships_matching_fund.htm

Resources

20) WILDLIFE: A SURVIVAL GUIDE FOR A WARMING WORLD

The National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) has published a "survival guide" with tips on safeguarding wildlife against climate change. Titled Wildlife: A Survival Guide for Warming World, the guide also includes a diverse collection of wildlife profiles. Loons and other birds living in the Great Lakes, for instance, are dying by the thousands from botulism, which some scientists believe is partly a result of climate change. Warmer lake temperatures have resulted in blooms of algae that, during decomposition, provide an ideal environment for Type E botulism that then makes its way into the food chain.

Read the full report at: http://www.npca.org/climatechange/wildlife_survival/pdfs/00-NPCA-Wildlife.pdf

21) NEW BLOG FROM EEA: "THE GREAT OUTDOORS"

EEA has launched a new blog providing Massachusetts residents and visitors information on outdoor activities and events, wildlife, state parks, and local agriculture. The Great Outdoors blog also offers suggestions for activities like hiking, fishing, and boating around the state, and is a helpful trip-planning tool.

Featuring posts from staff representing the Departments of Agricultural Resources (DAR), Conservation and Recreation (DCR), and Fish and Game (DFG), The Great Outdoors is sure to become a popular resource for anyone looking to explore the nature of Massachusetts.

Visit the blog at www.mass.gov/blog/environment

22) DCR HISTORIC LANDSCAPE PRESERVATION BULLETIN

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) is pleased to announce the publication of Terra Firma #8 – Rooted in History: Preserving Historic Farms. Working with Commissioner Scott Soares of the MA Department of Agricultural Resources, DCR developed the bulletin to broaden public understanding of farms as historic landscapes and to build a bridge between agricultural protection programs and historic preservation tools.

The Terra Firma bulletins can be downloaded at <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/histland/publications.htm>.

Paper copies are available upon request by calling 617-626-1389 or emailing wendy.pearl@state.ma.us. Individuals will be asked to send in a postage-paid SASE to cover the \$1.22/bulletin cost for mailing. Complimentary copies have been sent to the Commonwealth's legislators, historical commissions, agricultural commissions and planning boards.

23) REDUCE UNWANTED JUNK MAIL WITH CATALOG CHOICE

During the 2009 holiday shopping season, we hope that you received far fewer unwanted catalogs than in years past. If you did receive unwanted catalogs, be sure to go to www.CatalogChoice.org and enter your opt-out requests.

At Catalog Choice, our New Year's resolution is to give you even more control over what lands in your mailbox. Soon, we will be extending the service to include other forms of mail, allowing you to go paperless in many new ways.

Thanks for doing your part to reduce waste and save natural resources. Happy holiday wishes to all.

The Catalog Choice Team

Miscellany



24) NEW "LAND & WATER" PLATE SUPPORTS LAND PROTECTION - ORDER TODAY!

The Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition has been working with the Massachusetts Environmental Trust to establish a new "Land and Water Conservation" license plate program. The Trust's experience with license plate programs has demonstrated that this can be a stable and sustainable source of funding for land protection.

The Registry of Motor Vehicles requires that 3,000 plates be pre-ordered and held with checks sent in advance, before they will put this plate into production. Once the 3,000 checks are received, they will ship the plates to the vehicle owner. If the 3,000 plates are not sold in a year, they return the checks.

Please contact Bill Hinkley at MET for additional information about the plate or the program in general. He can be reached at 617.626.1177 or william.hinkley@state.ma.us

ORDER FORM & MORE INFO:

<http://www.masslandandwater.info/>

25) BECOME A FRIEND OF THE MASS. LAND TRUST COALITION!

The Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition relies on its network of Member Land Trusts and Friends of the Coalition for support. "Member" status is offered to "all non-profit, charitable organizations chartered to hold and/or convey land and/or interests in land for conservation purposes in Massachusetts". "Friend" status is offered to organizations, public entities, individuals and businesses that do not meet the requirements for membership but who wish to support and participate in the work of the Coalition.

Please join us and help support our efforts to encourage private, voluntary land protection and support sound public conservation policy. Please visit our membership page at: <http://massland.org/?q=member>

"The most radical thing we can do is introduce people to one another"

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