

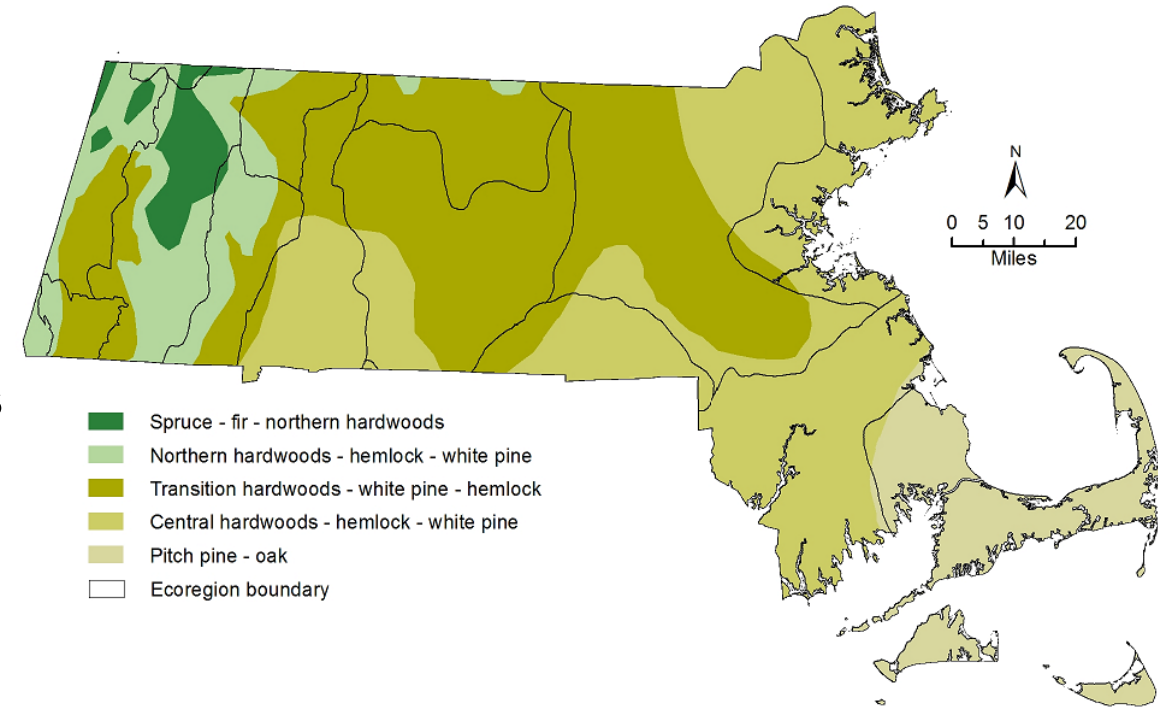
# **Land Trust/State Agency Retreat: Forests as Climate Solutions – Overview & Current Status**





# Massachusetts Forests

- **Acres in MA: 5,175,349**
- **Acres Forested: 2,984,347 or 57%**
  - Acres Privately Owned: 1,911,815
  - Acres Publicly Owned: 1,072,532
    - Acres State Owned: 525,377
      - Dept. of Conservation & Recreation State Parks Division; 280,196 acres
      - Dept. of Conservation & Recreation Water Supply Protection Division (MWRA System); 96,751 acres
      - Dept. of Fish & Game – Division of Fisheries & Wildlife; 143,294 acres
      - 5,136 acres jointly held by DCR and DFW
    - About 1,450 acres, or <1% of state forests, are harvested per year



# 2050 Clean Energy and Climate Plan: Key Forestry Related Recommendations

- Protect 40% of the Commonwealth's land by 2050 (currently 27%)
- Expand the protection, management, & restoration of Natural and Working Lands and their capacity to remove and store carbon
- Incent sustainable forest management practices that will allow us to produce forest products over the long term
- Encourage use of more durable forest products from local forests
- Create a Forest Viability Program to strengthen local sawmills and the forest economy

DECEMBER 2022

## Clean Energy and Climate Plan for 2050





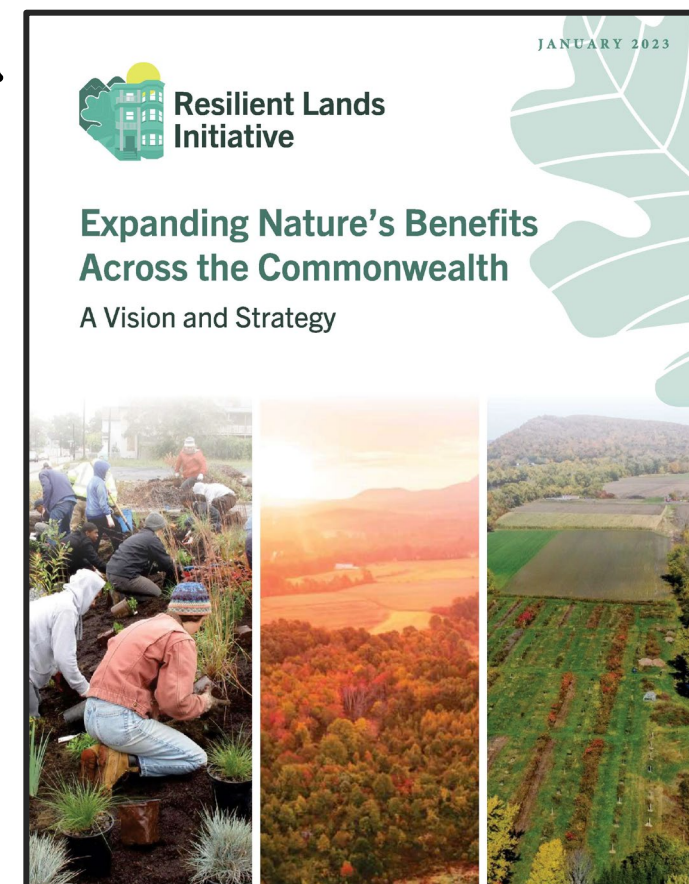
# Resilient Lands Initiative & Heathy Soils Action Plans: Key Forestry Related Recommendations

Resilient Lands Initiative: Protect and improve the quality of life for MA residents through land conservation, restoration, and stewardship initiatives that conserve and enhance the health of forests, farms, and soils.

- No net loss of forests
- Modify existing landowner tax incentive or launch the Forest Resilience Program to pay incentives to landowners to adopt verified forestry practices to expand carbon storage
- Support realization of Clean Energy & Climate Plans goals including protecting at least 30% of the remaining undeveloped land in MA by 2030 & increasing by 5% the use of long-lived durable wood products
- Seek to increase the percentage of long-lived forest products from existing harvests

Healthy Soils Action Plan: An assessment of the condition of MA soils and a blueprint for how to protect and properly manage soils to support thriving ecosystems and communities.

- Seek to protect healthy forested soils through strategic conservation of additional forest parcels
- Increase and adapt active forest management practices to bolster resistance to degradation from and resilience to climate change



# Forests as Climate Solutions – “Branch” #1

## Issue Climate-Oriented Forest Management Guidelines

To ensure future land management decisions fully account for climate mitigation & resilience:

- New climate-oriented guidelines are being developed and will be used for all state forest management projects;
- Advised by committee of climate scientists, practitioners and academics;
- Active forest management on state lands has been paused for six months for guideline development.





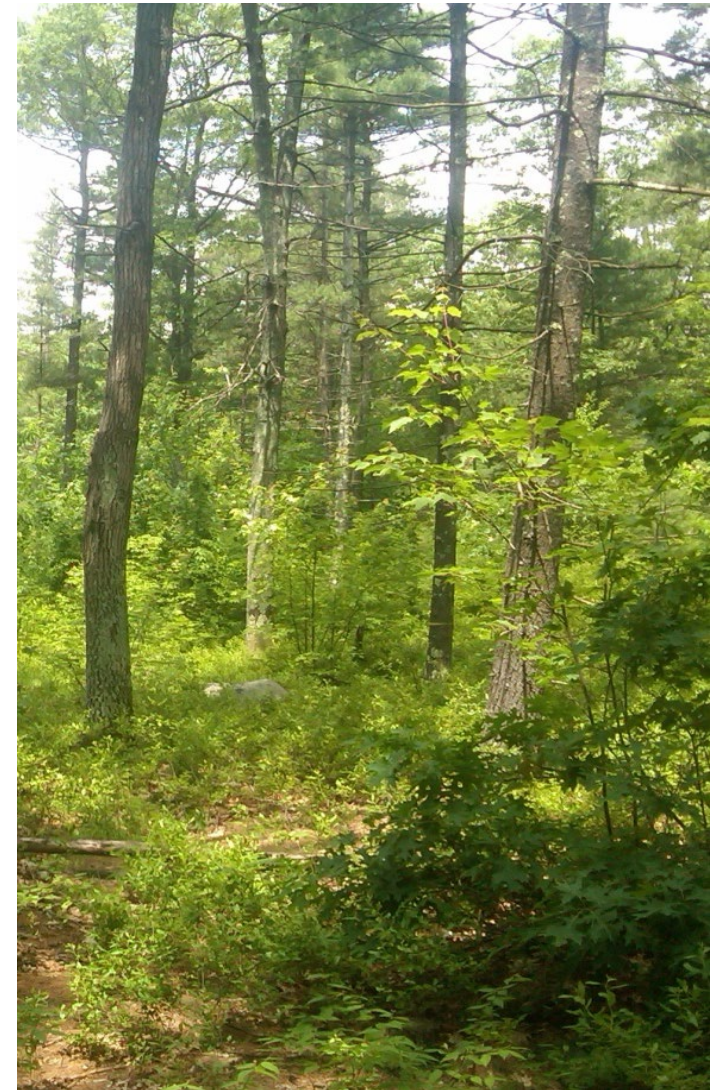
# Forests as Climate Solutions – “Branch” #2

## Conservation: Reduce Forest Land Conversion & Increase Permanent Forest Land Conservation

Strategically conserve additional forest land to permanently preclude conversion to other uses and improve land use to minimize forest loss.

### Key Actions:

- Implement the Resilient Lands Initiative to guide land conservation and related efforts of the state and other entities, with a focus on policies, programs, & investments that conserve forest land.
- Provide the resources to realize the Clean Energy & Climate Plans’ objective of protecting 30% of MA by 2030 & 40% by 2050, much of that land to be forested.
- Set, and commit to attaining, goals for:
  - Forest land conservation (currently ~35% of forest land is protected); &
  - Reduced land conversion (e.g., by 2030 reduce the conversion rate by 50%)

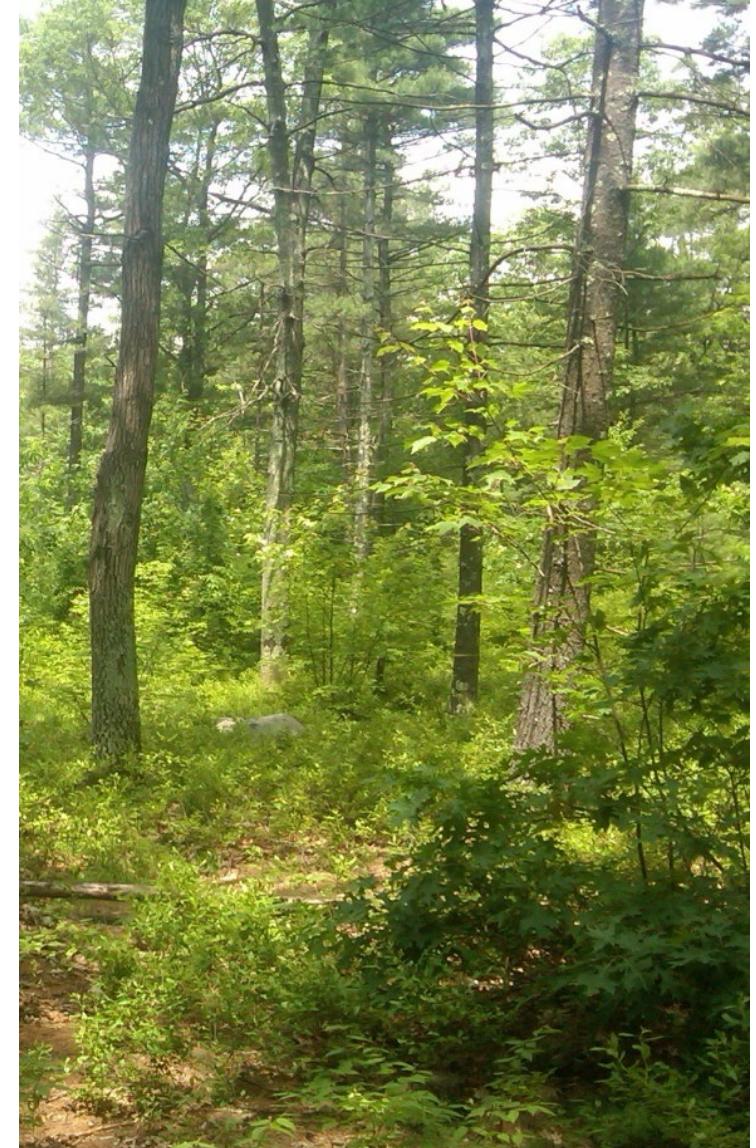


# Forests as Climate Solutions – “Branch” #2

**Expand Forest Reserves:** Pursue new focus on and investment in public and private forest reserves. These are areas where no active forest management is intended & nature largely takes its course; for carbon sequestration and storage, habitat, & other benefits.

## Key Actions:

- Set and commit to realizing a goal for a percentage of forest land to be held as Reserves;
- Consider permanent designation of Reserves, e.g., by statute;
- Increase land conservation funding and target investments at creating or enlarging Reserves with the best prospect for multiple benefits including provision of key habitat and long-term carbon sequestration;
- Work with land trusts & municipalities to establish Reserves on their holdings and across land held by multiple owners.
- Convene DCR’s Forest Reserves Scientific Advisory Committee and involve other experts & stakeholders to inform Reserve expansion.





# Forests as Climate Solutions – “Branch” #3

## Incentives: Support Forest Landowners, Businesses, & Rural Communities

Expand incentives and programs to protect private and municipally-owned forests, encourage landowners to manage them using climate-oriented forestry techniques, and help forestry businesses improve their technology and business practices.

### Key Actions:

- Offer financial incentives for climate-oriented forestry such as:
  - Property Tax: Evaluate Ch. 61 changes or creation of Ch. 61C for “Carbon”.
  - Grants: Fund landowner adoption of desired forestry practices.
  - Ecosystem Services: Provide compensation for land benefits.

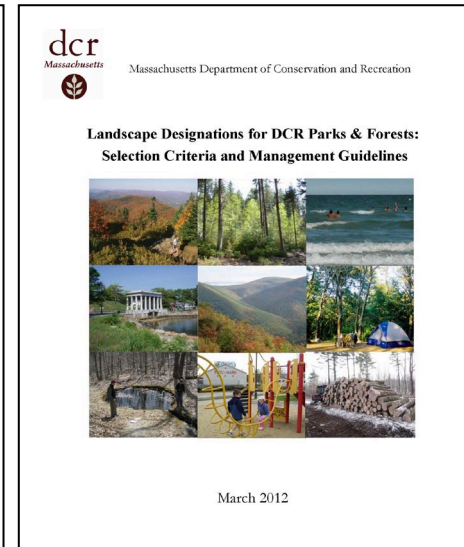
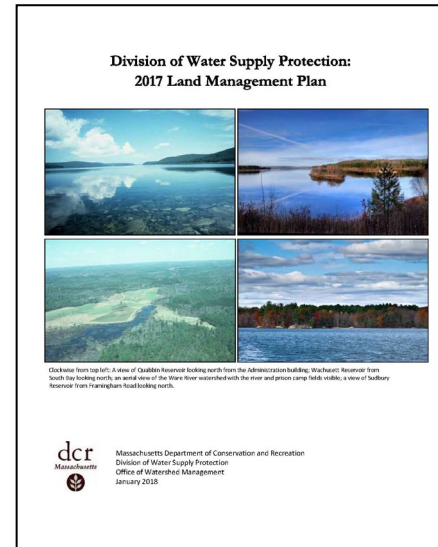
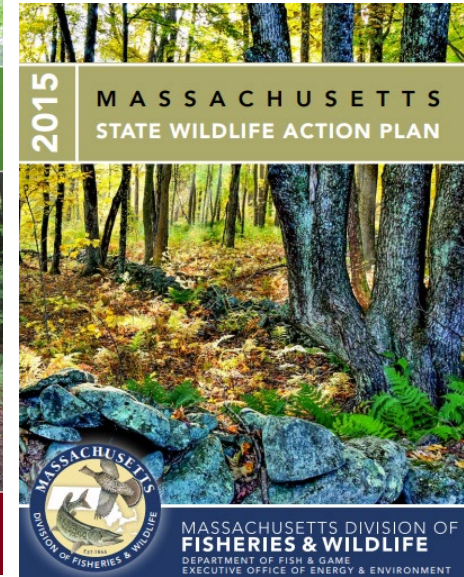
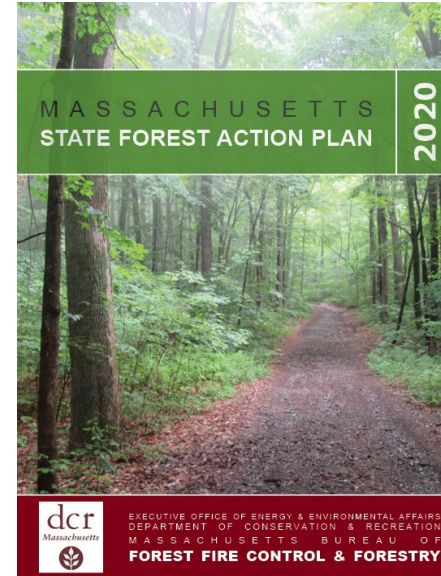




# Forests as Climate Solutions – “Branch” #4

## Data: Integrate & Make Public Best Science, Research, & Management Practices

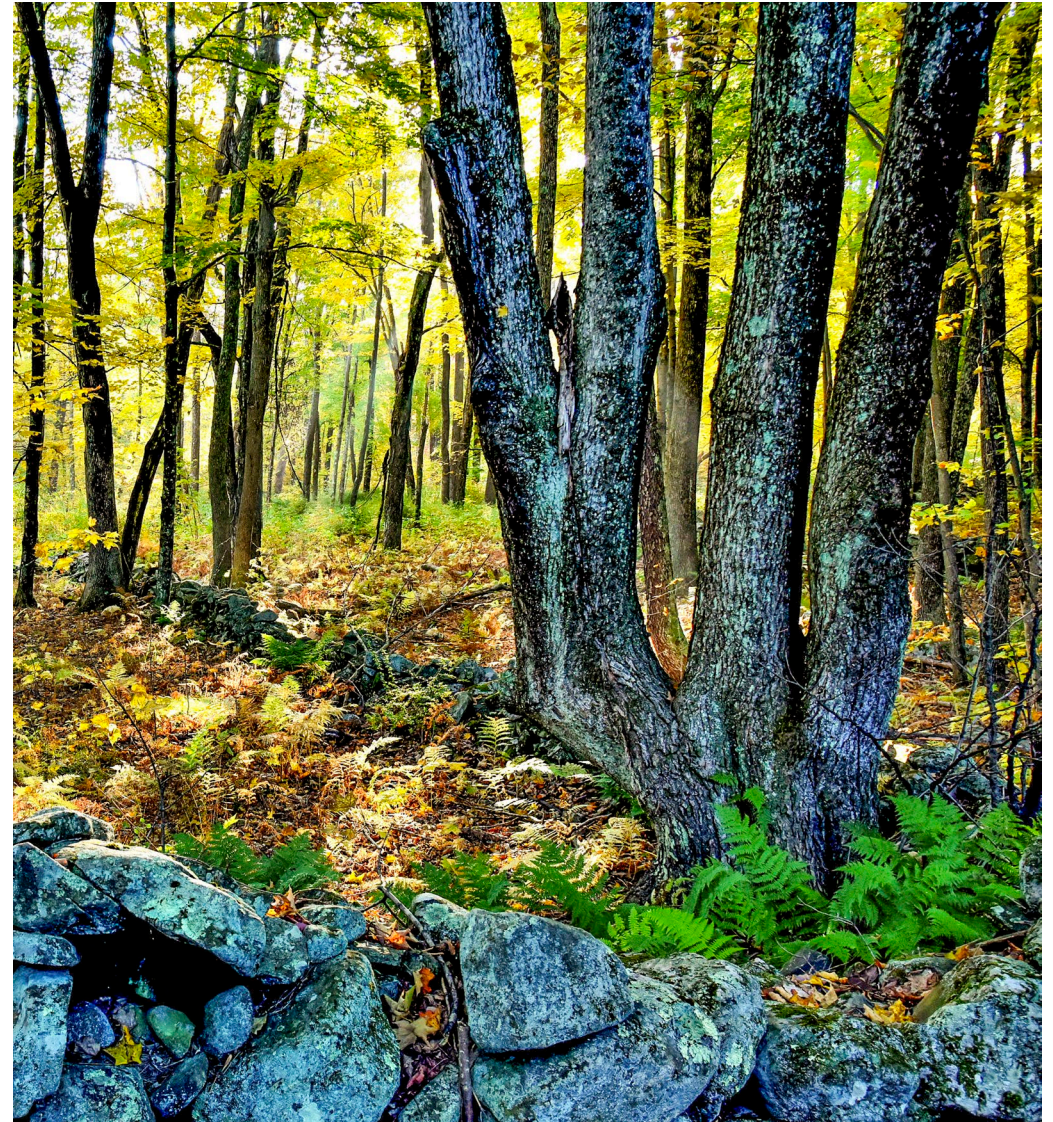
Acquire more field data, systematically integrate research into conservation & management practices & make information public.





# Landowner Incentives: Goals and Objectives

- Incentivize climate-smart forest management on private and municipal forest land to:
  - Reduce Forest Conversion
  - Store and Sequester Carbon
  - Enhance Forest Ecosystem Resilience
- Create new incentives and/or expand existing programs (e.g., cost-share programs, tax credits, grants, direct payments, other?)





# Forest Conservation & Expanding Forest Reserves: Goals and Objectives

- Develop a plan for EEA and agencies to implement components of the Resilient Lands Initiative (RLI) related to forest protection and that will help advance the land protection goal articulated in Clean Energy and Climate Plan for 2050 (CECP).
- Recommend a process to expand Reserves on state land.
- Evaluate the opportunity to establish Reserves on private and municipal lands





# **Discussion Questions**

## **Forest Conservation & Expanding Forest Reserves Break-out Group**

What potential aspects of a Forest Reserve framework would make it more likely for your organization to participate in adopting this designation or to pursue new land protection for establishing Forest Reserves?

## **Landowner Incentives Break-out Group**

What climate focused forest management practices are top priorities for your organization? What are the challenges associated with meeting these goals/implementing practices?