



MASSLAND E-NEWS

The Newsletter of the Massachusetts Land Conservation Community

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Special E-News: Land Conservation Accomplishments of 2011

Items of interest to the Massachusetts land protection community.

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

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"We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect."

-- Aldo Leopold (1887-1948), American wildlife ecologist, from "A Sand County Almanac" --

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MLTC News

1) MLTC SURVEY RESULTS FOR LAND PROTECTED IN 2011

2011 was a banner year for land conservation in Massachusetts. With the economic downturn reducing land values, public and private land conservation efforts took on an increased urgency. To fully understand this picture, the Mass Land Trust Coalition sent a survey to all land trust members requesting data on fee land protected in 2011, either alone or via partnerships.

Thus far 31 member organizations have responded with information which shows 2,167 acres of fee land protected in 2011.

- Small Land Trusts reported protecting 306.16 acres

- Regional and statewide land trusts reported 1,861.3 acres (384.3 fee land acquired by a sole organization and 1,477 acres protected via partnerships)

In addition to fee land protection, the Mass Division of Conservation Services listed 120 Conservation Restriction projects accomplished by conservation organizations in 2011, protecting approximately 2,880 acres of land across the state. This total does not include the latest 3,486 acre CR on Brushy Mountain, the largest CR on private property in state history! More information on this incredible 2011 accomplishment is available below.

Please help us to complete this picture of land you protected in 2011! Please submit your land trust 2011 fee data today [here!](#)

2) 22ND ANNUAL MASSACHUSETTS LAND CONSERVATION CONFERENCE

Working Lands: Farms, Forests and Conservation

When: Saturday, March 24, 2012 | 8AM – 4:00PM

Where: Worcester Technical High School, Worcester, MA

Registration opens soon!

Conference Brochure available [here](#)

Register now for the 22nd Massachusetts Land Conservation Conference, featuring 36 workshops on all aspects of land conservation. The conference is convened by the Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition and The Trustees of Reservations' Putnam Conservation Institute. This year we are very pleased to welcome co-sponsors Mass Audubon, The Nature Conservancy, The Trust for Public Land, American Farmland Trust and the Land Trust Alliance.

The 2011 Conference Theme is *Working Lands: Farms, Forests and Conservation* with a focus on farm and forest stewardship, hot topics in agriculture such as renewable energy, and community-based garden and farm projects.

*Download the 2012 conference brochure and list of workshops [here](#)

*Register for Exhibit Space [here](#)

*Send photos of your land trust's latest accomplishments for the conference slide show to [Lindsey Sarquilla](#)

Questions about the Conference? Contact [Miriam Scagnetti](#) (978.840.4446 x1935)

News

3) ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS UPDATE

--From Stephanie Cooper, EEA Assistant Secretary

As 2012 gets underway, we wanted to take a moment to thank the land trust community for your strong support and continued partnership. Working together, we are nearing 100,000 acres conserved since Governor Patrick took office in 2007, and we look forward to reaching and celebrating this incredible milestone together this year! With a total of 1,233,000 acres now protected in the Commonwealth, the Patrick-Murray Administration remains committed to our three investment priorities for land conservation - creation or renovation of urban parks, preservation of working farms and forests, and protection of our best remaining ecosystems.

Secretary Sullivan has brought an increased focus on landscape scale conservation -- for its important role in climate change adaptation as well as for its many other conservation benefits. With your help, this year EEA

successfully launched our new Landscape Partnership Program to support projects protecting 500+ acres with high values for wildlife, drinking water protection, forestry and tourism. We were thrilled to announce commitments of over \$5.7 million in funding to support all eight of the phenomenal projects for which we received applications, which will result in the permanent protection of over 8,000 acres!

We also recently announced awards for our other land conservation grant programs:

- Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities program (PARC) - 17 grants totaling more than \$7.3 million to help municipalities acquire parkland, renovate existing parks or build new parks and other outdoor recreation facilities.
- Gateway City Parks program - nine grants totaling \$6.8 million to fund design and construction of parks of all types and sizes including sections of several inter-municipal trails.
- Conservation Partnership program – ten grants totaling over \$514,000 to nonprofit organizations to preserve 409 acres of open space across Massachusetts.
- Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity (LAND) – nine grants totaling over \$1.9 million to help municipalities purchase 722 acres of farms, wetlands, forests, and wildlife habitat.
- Drinking Water Supply Protection program – two grants totaling nearly \$700,000 to municipalities to protect more than 183 acres of watershed land.

We are more committed than ever to working in close partnership with MLTC and land trusts throughout the Commonwealth to advance our shared agenda for land conservation. Our collective work yields essential benefits now and into the future in the form of cleaner water and air, more good locally grown food, higher property values and expanded tourism. There is no doubt that conservation is a smart investment in a better quality of life for future generations, and we look forward to more great work together in 2012!

4) COMMONWEALTH AND LAND TRUST PARTNERS COMPLETE LARGEST CONSERVATION RESTRICTION ON PRIVATE LAND IN MASSACHUSETTS IN 2011

Conservation restriction on nearly 3,500 acres of W.D. Cows' Land in Pioneer Valley maintains a sustainable working forest, conserves vital wildlife habitat and ensures public recreational access

Massachusetts Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Richard K. Sullivan Jr. today announced the Commonwealth's largest private land conservation deal since the 1920's. The partnership between the Department of Fish and Game (DFG), Kestrel Land Trust, Franklin Land Trust, and North Amherst-based W.D. Cows, Inc. has resulted in the protection of 3,486 acres of working forest land in the towns of Leverett and Shutesbury.

“This successful and historic land conservation initiative is the result of a unique partnership that will protect this treasure for generations,” said Governor Deval Patrick. “This land will forever be home to iconic wildlife, while remaining a productive working forest that supports local jobs and allows hunters, anglers and hikers to enjoy the great outdoors.”

Over the past four years, the Patrick-Murray Administration has conserved 85,000 acres of land across the state and the conservation restriction acquired today by the DFG and its Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MassWildlife) from W.D. Cows for \$8.8 million is the largest on a contiguous block of privately owned land in Massachusetts' history. Approximately \$3 million of the total is state funding, comprising DFG's investment of over \$1.4 million from the Commonwealth's open space bond authorization and \$500,000 in Land Stamp funds from the sale of fishing and hunting licenses, as well as \$1 million awarded to DFG and the land trusts by EEA's new Landscape Partnership Grant Program.

“By collaborating with partners in the private sector, the Commonwealth has leveraged almost \$6 million in non-state funding to conserve an incredible piece of land for all to enjoy,” said Lieutenant Governor Timothy

Murray. “This announced purchase reflects what can be achieved by building strong public/private partnerships.”

The 5.4 square mile area encompasses almost all of Brushy Mountain and includes additional adjacent parcels. Brushy Mountain and its adjoining Rattlesnake Gutter was recently named by the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism as one of the state's "Best 1,000 Places." The conservation restriction ensures that the property will not be developed – protecting key wildlife habitat – and guarantees public access for hunting, fishing, hiking, and other recreation. Motorized vehicle use - except for snowmobiles, motorized wheelchairs and owner forestry-related vehicles - will not be permitted.

More of this press release available [here](#)

Read more coverage of this exciting 2011 state agency - land trust partnership project [here](#)

5) A LOOK BACK AT LTA’S 2010 CENSUS REPORT FOR MASSACHUSETTS

In 2011, the Land Trust Alliance released the results of its 2010 National Land Trust Census. LTA reported that, as of 2010, land trusts in Massachusetts had protected 333,334 acres of land and ranked 15th in the nation in acres conserved!

Massachusetts’ Trends in Conservation: 2005-2010

- There are now 159 land trusts operating in Massachusetts, including 69 staffed groups and 61 all-volunteer groups.
- Massachusetts had a total of 1,241 paid positions in 2010.
- Land trusts in Massachusetts drew upon the work of 13,997 active volunteers (an increase of 58% since 2005) and the contributions of 20,6161 members and financial supporters.
- As a signal of the land trust community’s commitment to excellence, there are now 4 accredited land trusts in Massachusetts. Together, these 4 groups have protected 68,974 acres as of 2010.

Total

LTA’s Massachusetts Fact Sheet is available [here](#).

6) SUCCESSFUL FIRST YEAR FOR MASSLIFT AMERICORPS PROGRAM

In 2010, Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust and its partners initiated a new AmeriCorps program – the Massachusetts Lands Initiative for Tomorrow (MassLIFT). This statewide program is designed to help regional conservation groups meet critical community needs for land protection, including the initiation of new projects, stewardship of protected lands, community outreach, and service learning opportunities to engage young people in conservation.

MassLIFT AmeriCorps recruits 20 AmeriCorps members each year. Our first year members delivered stunning results:

- Initiated and assisted 49 land protection projects
- Helped two towns complete Open Space and Recreation Plans
- Created two new community gardens and 5 new trails
- Organized 228 public conservation and stewardship events
- Engaged over 2,080 community volunteers, including 1,235 youth, in 10,224 hours of service to conservation
- Monitored >13,337 acres of protected land in 74 towns.

To learn more about MassLIFT AmeriCorps and hosting MassLIFT members, visit our web page on the Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust website: <http://www.mountgrace.org/amicorps-masslift>. Contact: Dee Robbins, Program Manager (robbins@mountgrace.org or 978-833-4192).

7) JOIN SUDBURY VALLEY TRUSTEES IN AN EARTH DAY CAMPAIGN

Last year Sudbury Valley Trustees (SVT) launched its first Earth Day campaign and the success has led them to expand their efforts this year. In the 2011 campaign nine land trusts, including SVT, were represented in 172 Earth Day lawn signs. Members were more than happy to host the signs and drivers were able to view the signs as they drove from one town to another.

Earth day is the one time in the year when the whole nation is tuned in to protecting the environment and this campaign was organized in order to reach those that would not normally be the recipients of land trust outreach. The Earth Day lawn signs not only reinforce the idea of Earth Day to passersby but they drive home the fact that land trusts work toward protection of the environment and that there are a number of land trusts in every region doing this great work. With the awareness that these signs bring to the general public about land conservation and the visible support from residents, this campaign should successfully broaden the reach of land conservation.

It is a well-known axiom in the marketing world that it takes at least seven touches to turn a cold customer into a sale and in this case that means at least seven touches to get the general public interested in the cause of land conservation. That is why SVT hopes that many more land trusts will join in the effort this year to bring about a linkage of lawn signs throughout the state and a wider reach of our message.

More signs will result in more successful outreach and the more signs ordered the higher the reduction in cost. If your organization would like to join us please contact Ashley Davies by the end of February at adavies@svtweb.org or 978-443-5588 x121 (provide the number of signs requested and your logo). Together we can save money and land.

Resources

8) MASSLIFT AMERICORPS REQUEST FOR 2012 HOST SITE APPLICATIONS

The Massachusetts Land Initiative for Tomorrow (MassLIFT) AmeriCorps program invites non-profit organizations and public agencies working on land conservation in Massachusetts to apply for hosting members in our 2012 service year (September 11, 2012 – August 23, 2013). Our program aims to meet community needs for land protection and stresses regional collaboration. The MassLIFT program supports 20 AmeriCorps members, each completing 1,700 hours of service over an 11.5 month term. MassLIFT members serve in one of four positions: regional conservationists, land stewards, community outreach coordinators, and service learning coordinators. The 2012 MassLIFT Host Site Application Packet and Host Site Application Forms are posted on the Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust [website](#)

*Host Site applications are due by **March 1, 2012** and host sites will be selected by April 2, 2012.*

For more information contact the MassLIFT AmeriCorps program manager:
Dee Robbins (Email: robbins@mountgrace.org Phone: 978-833-4192)

9) US FOREST SERVICE RELEASED TAX TIPS FOR FOREST LANDOWNERS FOR 2011 TAX YEAR

The taxation program provides non-industrial private forest (NIPF) landowners with a consolidated source of information on the complex tax issues associated with forest maintenance and management. While our national forests are of course exempt from federal taxes, and corporate forest landowners often employ taxation specialists to help them manage their forest assets, NIPF landowners rarely have this expertise at their disposal. As a consequence, many forest landowners under invest in their forest lands and even unnecessarily subdivide them, leading to forest fragmentation and eventually forest disappearance.

Find the publication Tax Tips for Forest Landowners for 2011 Tax Year [Here](#)

People

10) REMEMBERING ALEXANDRA DAWSON

--From Mass Audubon

The environmental community lost a great advocate and friend this week with the passing of Alexandra Dawson, 80. Alexandra was an attorney, teacher and award-winning environmentalist known throughout the state for her dedication to ecological protection and her extensive knowledge of environmental law. She began her career at the Conservation Law Foundation and went on to be involved with many organizations including the Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions, the Kestrel Trust, and the Hadley Conservation Commission. She was also a professor at Antioch University Graduate School, where she helped develop the environmental program. In 2006 the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency presented her with its Environmental Merit Award for Lifetime Achievement.

Alexandra dedicated countless hours as a volunteer expert on innumerable legislative, regulatory, policy, and project initiatives. Among the issues she partnered with Mass Audubon on were the protection of Sweden's Swamp from the Attleboro Mall, which set an important national legal precedent for wetlands protection, and preventing New Bedford Airport from filling 58 acres of wetlands for a runway expansion. She was also a driving force for the majority of state forestlands to be managed by natural processes through the Department of Conservation and Recreation Forest Vision. Alexandra served as an inspiration to countless environmental advocates, including us at Mass Audubon. Her dedication, unique style, and expertise will be missed.

Find out more about Alexandra's legacy [here](#)

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