

Workshop Descriptions

Session One (8:45 AM - 10:10 AM)

1A. Climate Resilience For Your Community, Woods, and Wildlife

Jeff Ritterson, Mass Audubon; Ariel Maiorano, Mass Audubon; Lisa Hayden, New England Forestry Foundation

The importance of thinking and acting to protect forests and other natural areas, as well as managing development, is becoming apparent as Massachusetts municipalities consider launching local adaptation planning efforts to better prepare for increasingly potent natural disasters and a warming climate. Town officials, local land trusts, woodland owners and others who care about wildlife can chart a plan for making their community more resilient in many ways by working together through outreach and public engagement programs. For example, conservation and habitat management options for forest birds share many overlapping concepts with climate change adaptation strategies. So maintaining bird-friendly woods is one successful way to engage people about managing their land for the long term. From the regional and municipal level to the privately owned parcel, community members can envision, and take steps to shape, a resilient future in which forests are protected for multiple benefits and managed to provide homes for birds and wildlife.

1B. CR Baselines 101

Nick Rossi, Mass Audubon; Chris Volonte, Kestrel Land Trust; Andrew Bentley, New England Forestry Foundation

This workshop will cover the basics of completing a Baseline Documentation Report for Conservation Restrictions. It will include discussions on report format, timing, record keeping, data collection, and data management. Tips on how to handle a backlog of Baselines and when and how to update an inadequate Baseline via a current conditions report will also be covered. This is a great workshop if you are new to writing Baselines, if you are looking for a refresher, or if you just want to see how other professionals create these critically important documents.

1C. Pollinator Corridors: Promoting Biodiversity

Evan Abramson, Franklin Regional Council of Governments; Dr. Robert Gegear, Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Recognizing the essential biological and ecological function of pollination, as well as the worldwide phenomenon of pollinator decline which is presently taking place, land conservation organizations are uniquely positioned to create pollinator habitat corridors on their land. This workshop will give you the tools needed to do so.

1D. Land Conservation 101

Chris LaPointe, Essex County Greenbelt; Christa Collins, Sudbury Valley Trustees

This workshop is designed as the first of a two-session, entry-level “survey course” in land conservation project design and management, intended for new participants in land conservation. Participants are strongly encouraged to attend both sessions (LC 101 & 102). Both sessions will use a common case study approach to the topic. LC 101 will focus on initial project review and selection, structuring, and how to finance the project. Topics will include advice on building landowner relationships, negotiating donations, fair market value purchases, and bargain sales, and selecting the appropriate land conservation tool (Conservation Restriction, outright acquisition, or thereof). The session will also address how to fund the project, covering the full spectrum of public and private sector funding sources from private capital campaigns, corporations and foundations, municipal, state and federal sources. The presenters will share thoughts and strategies around Town Meeting campaigns in particular.

1E. Troubleshooting Land Negotiations

Rob Warren, The Trustees; Bob Wilber, Mass Audubon & Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition

Bring your negotiation challenges for collective troubleshooting! The presenters will provide an overview of negotiation basics, common deal obstacles, and a framework for responding. Most of the session however will be time for participants to get input from the presenters and other participants on their difficult negotiations. Distrustful landowner? Dueling appraisals? Feuding family members? We will discuss whatever challenges you are facing.

1F. How To Make the State House Work for YOU: Lobbying 101

Emily Myron, The Nature Conservancy; Gabby Queenan, Massachusetts Rivers Alliance

Visits from constituents to legislators is a crucial strategy for advancing our conservation agenda. This session will empower land trusts to engage in the legislative process. Participants will learn strategies and tactics to influence policy-makers to achieve goals for public funding and policy. We will also discuss potential threats and opportunities for the next two-year legislative session. Finally, there will be an interactive session in which participants will learn and practice crafting local stories into a compelling message.

1G. Building a Major Donor Program from the Ground Up

Mary Lynn Sabourin, CFRE, Franklin Land Trust

If you would like to build a major donor program but don't know where to begin, then this workshop is for you. Learn the basic steps for connecting your organization to individuals with the capacity to make a significant gift. This workshop will show you how even small nonprofits can accomplish major gift fundraising.

1H. Creating Sustainable Internships for Your Land Trust

Tom Mullin, Unity College

Have you ever heard this at a staff meeting: “Let’s get a college intern to do the project.” This workshop will showcase the best practices for creating sustainable internships for your land trust. Understanding the requirements for academic internships, the current student expectations and how they match up with your organization will be featured. The presenter will also share resources for recruitment.

1i. Partnering With Indigenous Tribes

Elizabeth James-Perry, Wampanoag Tribe of Gayhead-Aquinnah; Jamie Pottern, Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust; Lis McLoughlin, Consulting Anthropologist

This workshop, geared toward land trusts that have not yet formed Tribal partnerships, will help you think about how partnering with Indigenous Tribes can strengthen and enhance your work. In three sections it covers Cultivating Strawberries: A Federal Tribal Members Perspective on Land, Culture and Governance over time; and then at a very basic level 1) why work with Tribes including a discussion of social justice reasons as well as practical requirements, and 2) how to work with Tribes taking into account practicalities and emphasizing distinctions and commonalities between mandatory and voluntary Tribal consultation.

1J. Building Community Engagement with Urban Tree Planting

Bob O’Connor, MA EEA; Melissa Patterson, Franklin Land Trust

The residents of our cities are the conservation stewards of the future and need to be fully included in the land conservation movement. While land projects are more challenging in cities, urban tree planting is a great way to connect diverse urban communities with nature. This workshop will highlight the new partnerships that connect land trusts and other grassroots organizations to city residents through tree planting initiatives.

1K. Responding To Climate Change

Moderator: Steve Long, The Nature Conservancy; Panelists: Melissa Ocana, UMass Extension; Tom O’Shea, The Trustees

The goal of this round table session is to generate a conversation among participants about concerns and possible responses to the impacts of climate change on conservation values in your communities. Questions were solicited through the registration process and can be put forward in the session. Topics are likely to include: types of impacts, resources for response, and programs for funding.

Session Two (12:45 PM - 2:10 PM)

2A. Local Action for Coastal Climate Resilience

Tom O'Shea, The Trustees; Rob Warren, The Trustees; Jen Ryan, The Trustees

Explore what your organization can do in your town to respond to the ecological impacts of climate change at the Massachusetts coast. This session will provide an overview of several emerging topics including land protection planning and action to facilitate the inland migration of tidal habitats and to ensure long term public access to coastal resources; examples of state capital funded resiliency projects that allow for adaptation of natural resources; exploration of new techniques in ecological adaptation of coastal habitats; and information on publicly available data and planning resources, as well as funding.

2B. Mapping Tools for a More Resilient Future

Lucy Lee, Harvard Forest; Heidi Ricci, Mass Audubon; Julie Wood, Charles River Watershed Association; Sara Burns, The Nature Conservancy

This session will demonstrate two new map-based tools for expanding the vision and strategies for land protection and ecological restoration for resiliency to the impacts of climate change. The New England Landscape Futures Explorer allows you to explore four alternative land-use and climate futures and their impacts on conservation priorities at local to regional scales. Speakers will explain the stakeholder-driven processes of creating the future scenario narratives and maps and provide examples of how land trusts are utilizing the tool in their work. The mapping Tool for Nature Based Solutions and Hazard Reduction is a pilot mapping program for the Charles River watershed. The team behind this tool will discuss its development and demonstrate how this tool can help prioritize both conservation and recreation projects for multiple benefits including habitat and water supply protection, and climate resilience.

2C. Trails: Making (and Keeping) Lands Accessible

David Ciernia, Student Conservation Association

A sustainable trail is seldom found, it is usually designed. In order to build a good trail, one must understand what the trail needs from its users (or intended users, if it is new trail). Once the user group is known, trails can be designed with things in mind such as user impact, materials, and labor. The content of this workshop will be best practices in assessment and remediation of trails. Topics covered will include designing trails with user groups in mind, sustainability in trail grades, managing water, and pros & cons to various trail building materials. It is designed to primarily cover the fundamentals, but will also touch on more advanced topics. This workshop will focus on trail work done without the use of heavy equipment; as such, it will not cover ADA trails or standards.

2D. Habitat Restoration on State Wildlife Lands

Dr. Jonathan Regosin, Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife; Liz Newlands, Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

This workshop will review the process used by the MassWildlife Biodiversity Initiative (BDI) to: 1) prioritize lands for restoration of grassland, heathland, and pitch pine/scrub oak barrens habitats; 2) determine management practices needed to achieve the desired future condition; 3) assess potential mitigation of practices to accommodate expected climate-induced landscape changes; 4) determine in-house vs. contracted portions of management actions; and 5) conduct/administer management practices.

2E. Land Conservation 102

David Santomenna, The Trustees; Kate Buttolph, Mass Audubon; Jim Monahan, LandVest

This workshop is designed as the second of a two-session, entry-level “survey course” in land conservation project design and management, intended for new participants in land conservation. Participants are strongly encouraged to attend both sessions (LC 101 & 102). Both sessions will use a common case study approach to the topic. LC 102 will focus on the nuts and bolts of the conservation real estate transaction, including legal considerations (how to “paper the deal”, i.e. purchase and sale and option agreements), as well as the full spectrum of due diligence matters, including title, survey, environmental, and a specific focus on appraisal as a negotiations tool as well as a due diligence topic. The overall theme of this session is how to get to the recording desk at your local registry of deed with a minimum of drama, once the project has been defined in LC 101.

2F. A New Conservation Tool: The Pooled Timber Income Fund

Sophie Traficonte, New England Forestry Foundation; Ray Lyons, Attorney; Lisa Hayden, New England Forestry Foundation

This workshop will introduce a new land conservation tool called the Pooled Timber Income Fund (PTIF) that offers landowners the opportunity to permanently protect their forests and receive tax benefits and lifetime income. The presenters will focus on how the PTIF accelerates the protection of working woodlands in the region, and will explain the opportunities that it can bring to both individual landowners and even local land trusts. By the end of the session, you should leave with a full understanding of the tool and the future possibilities it holds. Please join us to find out how you might be able to take advantage of the PTIF.

2G. Run the Numbers!

Stephen J. Small, Esq., Law Office of Steven J. Small

If the income tax deduction for a CR donation is important to the landowner, the landowner shouldn't guess or estimate what the tax results will be, and the land trust certainly shouldn't estimate what the tax results will be. There are too many tax variables for anyone to be a good guesser. The landowner should work with a qualified tax professional, and run the numbers. Steve will go over a few income tax planning spreadsheets dealing with CR deductions (including one example of a bargain sale). Steve will also share a few “tax planning tips” having to do with conservation restriction donations that are actually good news items.

2H. Update from the Conservation Restriction Review Program at MA EEA

Bob O'Connor, MA EEA; John Gioia, MA EEA; Vanessa Johnson-Hall, Essex County Greenbelt; Zoe Foster, MA EEA

All permanent conservation restrictions (CR's), unless held by a state agency, must receive approval by the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs pursuant to MGL Chapter 184 Section 32. As such, the Division of Conservation Services (DCS), out of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, coordinates the review process of draft conservation restrictions. Join DCS staff and CR practitioners in this interactive workshop for an overview of the conservation restriction review process, an activity and discussion on some common issues that come up during the review process, and an overview on facilitating the review process once your CR has been submitted. DCS will also present findings from a project that tracked and analyzed trends in conservation restrictions.

2i. Benefits of Partnerships: Sharing Capabilities to Protect Land & Watersheds

Don Burn, Westborough Community Land Trust; Paul Doscher, Trout Unlimited; Garry Crago, Trout Unlimited

Learn from two organizations how collaborations helped them achieve critical conservation successes that would not have been possible without the support of partners. Hear how Westborough Community Land Trust was able to protect over 350 acres of land and build the 60 mile Westborough Charm Bracelet Trail Network by teaming up with town boards, community organizations, and regional partners. Find out how Trout Unlimited (TU) and their partners, land trusts and public agencies, have joined efforts to acquire, protect and restore highest quality cold water streams and their watersheds. TU members will explain how their science programs can help land trusts identify important cold water streams, provide technical services to evaluate habitat, identify problems, offer design solutions, and provide valuable stewardship assistance.

2J. Nature & Mindfulness: Tools for Engagement

Becky Cushing, Mass Audubon; Stephen Daoust, Kripalu Center for Yoga & Health

Mass Audubon's Berkshire Wildlife Sanctuaries and the Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health have developed a series of Nature and Mindfulness programs that explore the intersection of mindfulness practices with an appreciation and understanding of the natural world. This unique approach to outdoor skills through the lens of mindful, meditative observation opens the door to an entirely new way of viewing nature and its inhabitants in any landscape. Join Mass Audubon Berkshire Sanctuaries Director Becky Cushing and Director of Kripalu R&R and Programs, Steve Daoust to learn about mindfulness in nature as a tool for engagement.

2K. Hot Topics in Stewardship

Moderator: Cynthia Henshaw, East Quabbin Land Trust; Panelists: Sally Naser, The Trustees; Chris Pryor, New England Forestry Foundation; Laura Mattei, Sudbury Valley Trustees

During this roundtable session, we will discuss current stewardship challenges that are impacting land trust properties. Bring your challenges and questions. Together we will brainstorm solutions and paths forward. Specific topics are likely to include: dogs and dog walkers on conservation land, invasive plant control and restoration of native vegetation, deer management, timber harvesting, property maps and technology.

Session Three (2:30 PM - 3:55 PM)

3A. Collaborating on Municipal Climate Adaptation Planning & Implementation

Margot Mansfield, MA EEA; Ariel Maiorano, Mass Audubon

A panel of state experts and certified trainers will explain how land trusts can engage in the Commonwealth's Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) program; from facilitating community-wide climate change vulnerability assessments to implementing priority strategies. Learn how the process can advance land trust priorities for climate resilience and help communities understand how cost-effective nature-based solutions provide multiple co-benefits. Examples of climate-smart projects throughout the Commonwealth – from dam removals to planting rain gardens, conservation for drinking water protection, floodplain buyouts, and riverside restoration – will also be discussed.

3B. Streamlining Your Monitoring Program with Technology

Caleb Pourchot, Dendroyka LLC; Michael Madole, The Trustees

Your organization's easement monitoring obligations continue to increase, but your staff size probably doesn't. Find the extra time you need by working smarter, not longer. The application of web-based and mobile device technologies can drastically reduce the amount of time you spend planning and executing your annual monitoring program. This workshop will introduce you to many technologies and best practices for tools you may already have that will make your monitoring program more efficient, effective, and resilient.

3C. Sharing Multiple Missions of Your Land Trust Through Interpretive Messaging

Tom Mullin, Unity College; Judith Barr, Wellesley Conservation Trust

The last 10 years has seen the land trust movement recognize the interconnection of preservation, land stewardship and community outreach as being a vital part of their mission. Telling the story of why protection of the landscape is just as important as saving it from development is critical. Participants in this workshop will learn how to incorporate the foundations of interpretation and best practices for various delivery methods. Using these interpretive messaging methods to tell the story behind the scenery and share why it is so critical to preserve these special places. Featured will be a case study from the Wellesley Conservation Council on how documenting the 40-year botanical evolution of its 25-acre Guernsey Sanctuary led to developing a 1-mile, interactive QR-code nature trail that encourages a multi-layered experience in and appreciation of this special place. Participants will be encouraged to share their successes in furthering the mission of their land trust via publications, exhibits and waysides.

3D. Economic Impacts of Conserved Land

Helena Murray, UMass Amherst; Paul Catanzaro, UMass Amherst

There are many ways to quantify the economic benefits that conserved land provides. We will present two projects and their implications for conservation in Massachusetts. The first project focuses on how economic activities on conserved forests contribute to jobs and local economies, using case-studies about land conserved by the Forest Legacy Program throughout the United States. Then, we will talk about cost of community services studies to see how different land uses impact town finances and provide examples from Massachusetts towns.

3E. A New Day for Transfer of Development Rights in Massachusetts

Moderator: Larry Field, MA Smart Growth Alliance; Kurt Gaertner, MA EEA; Dr. Malcolm MacGregor, Plymouth Planning Board; Heidi Ricci, Mass Audubon

The 2018 Environmental Bond legislation created the Commonwealth's first Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Revolving Fund. Once implemented and funded, the program can solve the timing problem that has been a barrier to effective use of local TDR ordinances—the lag between sale of the development rights on the “sending” parcel and acquisition of those rights on the “receiving” parcel. With this Fund, TDR can be a more robust tool for protecting land from development. This panel discussion will discuss the implementation issues involved in this exciting new program.

3F. Understanding and Applying the Conservation Land Tax Credit

Thomas Anderson, MA EEA; Mark Robinson, The Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts & Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition

We will review the annual \$2 million state tax credit process and its financial benefits from start to finish, including site eligibility, required documents, and post-recording compliance. An experienced land trust user of the program will describe how the tax credit can be a powerful tool in negotiating bargain sales, as well as for land donations and conservation restrictions.

3G. Division of Conservation Services Grant Programs

Melissa Cryan, MA EEA; Emmanuel Owusu, MA EEA

Participants will receive general information on the variety of grant programs and funding opportunities offered by DCS for conservation and recreations projects, including the LAND, PARC, LWCF, Drinking Water Supply Protection, Landscape Partnership, and Conservation Partnership grant programs. Topics covered will include eligibility requirements, application processes, answers to common questions, and what an “ideal” grant-funded project would be.

3H. Engaging Youth Through Conservation Partnerships

Will Snyder, UMass Extension; Rachel Calderera, Wildlands Trust; Becky Bottomley, Envirothon Coach; Jacob Freedman, Middlebury College; Oscar Psychas, Middlebury College

This panel discussion will highlight opportunities for youth engagement in environmental stewardship in partnership with land trusts. The workshop will provide case studies of approaches to youth engagement, including project experiences of Massachusetts Envirothon teams and youth programs in Vermont, Florida, and Worcester, Massachusetts. Participants will have a chance to share their own experiences and contribute to an inventory of best practices for this work. The session will include a special focus on the new Massachusetts law that requires high schools to offer each student at least one opportunity to participate in a student-led civic engagement project, and how land trusts might use this to make connections with youth and their advisors.

3i. Legal Issues & Solutions

Moderator: Buzz Constable, Mass Land Trust Coalition, The Trustees & Lincoln Land Conservation Trust; Panelists: Irene Del Bono, Attorney; Stephen J. Small, Esq., Law Office of Steven J. Small

Leading conservation attorneys (both on the panel and those who customarily attend and contribute) will converse about cases, issues and best legal practices involving land conservation and operations of land trusts and conservation professionals. This year, we will emphasize the several topics that have had significant court, agency or policy changes since the last conference, including especially IRS court cases, policies, notices and regulations that may affect drafting decisions for conservation transactions. As in the past, there will be opportunity for other issues that may be suggested by registrants or audience participants.