



Nature for Massachusetts
Signature Drop, December 1, 2025



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Conservation Partners Meeting

December 12, 2025

via Zoom

Next Meeting



Friday, February 27
10 am – 12:15 pm

Zoom only

register: massland.org/events

Check out the Events Calendar

massland.org/events

JAN
7

Wed, Jan 7 2026, 1 - 2pm

Land Protection Quarterly Networking Zoom

via Zoom

DEC
16

Tue, Dec 16 2025, 2 - 3pm

Stewardship Quarterly Networking Zoom

via Zoom

JAN
14

Wed, Jan 14 2026, 2 - 3pm

Small Staffed Land Trusts Quarterly Networking Zoom

via Zoom

FEB
5

Thu, Feb 5 2026, 1 - 2pm

Land Trust Finance Quarterly Networking Zoom

via Zoom

FEB
11

Wed, Feb 11 2026, 1 - 2pm

Agriculture Quarterly Networking Zoom

via Zoom

Stewardship Short-Course



Stewardship Fundamentals for
Fee and CR Properties

Four Tuesdays, 4:00 – 5:30 pm

January 20 – February 10, 2026
via Zoom

\$50 per organization for members of LTA or MLTC
\$75 for non-member organizations



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Massachusetts Land Conservation Conference



Guyette Farm
Franklin Land Trust

Friday • **March 13** • UMass Amherst

Registration coming in January!

massland.org/conference for details

featuring a keynote on **Nature and Health** by
Pooja Tandon, MD, MPH
Pediatrician and Health Director, The Trust for Public Land



Thanks to our Conference Planning Committee --

Buzz Constable • Tessa Dowling • Vanessa Farny • Abby Hardy-Moss • Amy Henderson •
Cynthia Henshaw • Vanessa Johnson-Hall • Bridget Likely • Nick Rossi • David Santomenna •
Vidya Tikku • Barbara Chrenko • Robb Johnson • Lauren Berk

thanks to our sponsors!

Platinum



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Buzzards Bay Coalition - Davey Resource Group - Franklin Land Trust - Landscape Land Conservation Software
Land Trust Alliance - LandVest - Little Green Light - Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust - Norcross Wildlife Foundation
The Conservation Fund - SWCA Environmental Consultants - Tighe & Bond

Contributor

The Community Preservation Coalition - The Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts - Durand and Anastas Environmental Strategies
Horsley Witten Group - Law Office of Stephen J. Small - Lynch Scrimo Attorneys - The Trust for Public Land



Land Protection Tools & Techniques Course, November 9, 2025
Wildlands Trust Stewardship Training Center, Plymouth



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Thank you!

Existing Ch. 61, 61A, 61B law

Chapter 61 Programs

Understanding the Massachusetts
Ch. 61 Current Use Tax Programs



Chapter 61 programs offer a break on local property taxes for landowners who commit to keeping land undeveloped for a specified period of time.

In exchange, the town/city gets a Right of First Refusal (ROFR) to acquire that land if it is facing conversion to a non-qualifying use (e.g. residential, industrial, commercial) while enrolled in the program, or within one year of withdrawal from the program.

Once a landowner provides a compliant notice of intent to convert to a non-qualifying use, the town/city has 120 days to exercise its ROFR or assign it **to any state agency** or qualified conservation organization.

The mayor/Board of Selectmen must hold a public hearing before exercising or assigning their ROFR.

They are **not** required to hold a hearing – or confer with others – before **waiving** their ROFR.

link to publication: [08993_UMass 5.5.indd](#)



Changes Proposed in Mass Ready Act

Adds **carbon sequestration** to definition of forest products under Ch 61; clarifies that Ch. 61 forest management plans don't have to include cutting.

Updates public notice requirements for public hearings.

For Chapter 61 and Chapter 61B: **DCR** gets a ROFR that runs concurrently with the city/town's -- which DCR can exercise *only if the city/town waives its own ROFR*. **DCR can assign to DFW.**

For Ch 61A, **MDAR** gets this right. **MDAR can assign to DCR.**

Requires DCR/MDAR to confer with EOHLC and EOED before exercising ROFR.

Landowners must provide notice of intent to convert to DCR/MDAR when they notify the city/town.



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Changes Proposed in Mass Ready Act

Gives DCR/MDAR the same right as the city/town to notify the landowner (within 30 days) that the notice of intent to convert lacks required information.

Enables city/town and state agencies to collaborate on appraisals, public hearings and other obligations.

City/town must notify state agency of hearings, intent to exercise, assign or not exercise.

Gives state 30 days to record its notice to exercise after town declines or fails to do so.

Land acquired by state agencies must be dedicated to Article 97 purposes.



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Other Changes MLTC is Discussing

For sales **without** a change of use, require seller and buyer to provide affidavits to the Town attesting to that. (Should moves between forestry/farming/rec land be permissible without triggering ROFR?)

Require Mayor/Board of Selectmen to confer with Planning Board, Board of Assessors and Conservation Commission (if any) – **and hold a public hearing** – before waiving their ROFR.

Clarify that onset of the 120-day option period is delayed if **either** city/town **or** DCR/MDAR notifies landowner (within 30 days) that landowner's notice of intent to convert lacks required information.



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Other Changes MLTC is Discussing

Allow state agencies to assign to non-profit conservation organization.

(Should a state interest (Article 97) be required as part of the end outcome? If so, how to ensure that?)

Require that no sale can be completed until both city/town and state have recorded notices of non-exercise.

For Ch. 61A, prohibit MDAR from assigning to DCR or DFW?

For Ch. 61A, add requirement that MDAR (or land trust) would resell to a farmer, with an APR/CR?

Require MDAR to continue paying property tax during hold period?

Drop Mass Ready Act proposal to give state 30 days to record notice of intent to exercise?



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