

## **MASSACHUSETTS LAND TRUST COALITION**

Massland eNews

The Newsletter of the Massachusetts Land Conservation Community

December 15, 2022, Volume 20, Number 12

Member Spotlight



#### **Doe Valley Farm in Petersham Newly Protected**

Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust's newest completed project will be the permanent protection of Petersham's Doe Valley Farm. Don Flye has lived on these 20 acres for more than 50 years, and began working with Mount Grace, and with his son Michael, to conserve the land after more than a decade of volunteering at Mount Grace events. Doe Valley Farm is a working landscape with a well-managed forest, five acres of pasture, a cornucopia of blueberries, and several historic farm buildings dating to the 18th century. Trails along the wooded boundaries of the farm connect to Petersham's nearby Davenport Pond Conservation Area (also protected with help from Mount Grace as part of a 2009 Forest Legacy project) and are used by the public, including the nearby New England Equestrian Center. Don boards horses at his farm, and encourages his neighbors to get out on the land, including by hosting conservation workshops at the farm in partnership with Mount Grace and UMass Extension. Don is generously donating a conservation restriction to Mount Grace. Protecting this land has been possible in part thanks to the Massachusetts Conservation Land Tax Credit. Read more.

Consider supporting MLTC's efforts to inform, connect, and advocate for the Massachusetts land conservation community. Your monthly or one-time tax-deductible donation of any amount is appreciated. Thank you! <u>Donate here</u>.





Remember to support MLTC on <u>AmazonSmile</u> when you make a purchase. Thank you!

## MLTC News and Programs



A dusting of snow added a nice seasonal touch to Kestrel Land



Trust's Greenberg Family Conservation Area in Westhampton. #OurMassLandTrusts

We are now publishing eNews on a new platform. If you received this despite having previously unsubscribed, please accept our apologies. Use the Unsubscribe option at the bottom of this eNews edition and that should take care of it. Thanks for understanding!

## Policy

#### **PLPA takes effect in February**

**An Act preserving open space in the Commonwealth** (also known as the Public Lands Preservation Act, or PLPA) takes effect on February 17th, three months after Governor Baker signed it. The law requires the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) to promulgate regulations within 18 months of the law's passage to guide its enforcement, and we anticipate draft regulations will be available for public comment well before then. EEA is also working on interim guidance for review of legislative petitions to convert public parks and conservation land to other uses before new regulations are in place. See our partners' joint statement on passage of the law <u>here</u>, and WBUR coverage <u>here</u>.

#### Planning underway for open space funds from Economic Development Bill

The Economic Development bill signed in November included \$175 million for open space, outdoor recreation, ecological restoration and climate resiliency, \$75 million of which is designated for environmental justice communities. Our present understanding is that these funds will be spent over a three-year period. The funds can be spent on a broad range of needs, including land acquisition by state agencies, state grant programs for cities, towns and land trusts, ecological restoration projects including dam removal and wetland

restoration, and more. EEA has already made recommendations to Governor Baker on how this money should be allocated, and partners plan to work with the Healey-Driscoll Administration on allocation decisions they may make after taking office in January. The Economic Development Bill also included \$100 million for the Clean Water Trust, \$20 million for the CPA Trust Fund, and several earmarks relevant to our constituents.

#### **New Office of Outdoor Recreation**

At an event on December 5th at Mt. Wachusett Ski Area, Lt. Governor Polito announced creation of a new Office of Outdoor Recreation (OREC) within the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA). The Office will focus on coordinating outdoor recreation policy; identifying funding opportunities for programs and infrastructure; enhancing public access and recreation infrastructure; supporting the outdoor recreation economy; advancing equity and access to recreation opportunities; and promoting Massachusetts as a great place to enjoy recreation. AMC and The Trustees were among advocates who had championed this initiative. The <u>OREC Director</u> will report to the Environmental Undersecretary at EEA.

#### **Resilient Lands Initiative (RLI)**

MLTC led an effort to send a letter to the Governor signed by members of the Resilient Lands Initiative Steering Committee requesting that he release the <u>Resilient Lands</u> <u>Initiative Vision Plan</u> before leaving office. In personal communication on December 5th, EEA Secretary Beth Card indicated she is hopeful that the report will indeed be released by year-end.

#### **Solar Siting**

An Act Driving Clean Energy and Offshore Wind (Ch. 179 of the Acts of 2022) included provisions allowing land with dual solar and agriculture use (aka agrivoltaics) to remain in Chapter 61A as land in agricultural use, without any limitations on the scale of the project. This provision also may allow large solar projects on APR lands. The law applies the agricultural exemption to the Zoning Act to these properties, in addition to the existing exemption for solar projects. The law also created a commission to study and make recommendations "to remove barriers to further development of agrivoltaic projects".

#### The Charitable Conservation Easement Program Integrity Act

The Land Trust Alliance continues to press for passage of the Charitable Conservation Easement Program Integrity Act before the end of the year. The bill, which is critical to ending abuse of conservation tax incentives by bad actors, was incorporated into the Setting Every Community Up for Retirement Enhancement (SECURE) Act 2.0, which enjoys strong bipartisan, bicameral support and is expected to be considered as part of an end of year package. There are no guarantees it will pass, so we encourage you to reach out to <u>your members of Congress</u> urging them to co-sponsor the Integrity Act (H.R. 4164, S. 2256) and ensure its swift passage. Click <u>here</u> to learn more, including advocacy language you might use.

#### News

#### **New BioMap Released**

MassWildlife and The Nature Conservancy recently launched an enhanced version of BioMap, an online tool designed to guide strategic protection and stewardship of lands and waters that have the highest conservation value for preserving biological diversity in Massachusetts. New features include a habitat restoration resource center, data on local conservation priorities, and mapping of climate resilient habitats. <u>Learn more</u>. <u>Sign up for a</u> <u>training webinar</u> to be held Wednesday, January 18.

#### **Habitat Grants Awarded**

Habitat restoration is vital for supporting the diversity of wildlife found in Massachusetts. This year, MassWildlife Habitat Management Grants were awarded to 13 organizations – including many land trusts – to fund improvement projects on 514 acres of wildlife habitat across the state. Learn more about these projects.

## Webinars and eLearning

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#### **Conservation Finance Learning Lab**

Second Tuesday of each month, December 2022 – April 2023 This free five-part lab will feature panel discussions, case studies, and networking opportunities for participants to discuss tangible, innovative approaches to conservation funding and financing. Each session will build on the previous one, and though participation in all is not required, **attendance at most sessions will ensure the full benefit of the series.** Learn more and register.

#### Free Risk Management Webinars via Terrafirma

Thursdays in January, 3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Learn how to plan for risks, avoid unnecessary lawsuits, and minimize the damage from legal challenges. By participating in a webinar, benefit from a discount to the yearly annual TerraFirma insurance premium. Attend one, some, or all.

Thursday, January 12\* | Advanced Risk Management: Managing Risk With Outside Lawyers

\* Advanced webinar. You must have attended at least one risk management training previously.

Thursday, January 19 | Basic Risk Management: Tips From Terrafirma

### **QGIS for ALL: From LiDAR to Topos With QGIS**

January 12, 19, 26 (three consecutive Thursdays), 3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Offered by the Conway School, the QGIS course is of particular interest to land trusts and other land-based organizations who want to create maps and analyze information, as the software is free and you don't need a license to use it. <u>Details and to register</u>. Contact CJ Lammers at <u>institute@csld.edu</u> with questions.

### **Building the New Forest Future**

This webinar series by the Northern Forest Center highlights stories, practices, and lessons from rural community development in the Northern Forest. It features communities and organizations that have demonstrated innovation and progress in critical sectors. <u>View past</u> webinars, check out upcoming ones (the next is Tuesday, January 17 at noon, on Ensuring

Climate Resilience).

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Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Webinar Series Wednesday, January 18, 10:00 a.m. – noon Community-Based Problem Solving: Empowering Citizens to Become Participants in the Action Grant Implementation Process. Learn more and register.

Wednesday, January 25, 10:00 a.m. – noon Heat Waves in a Changed Climate: Planning For and Addressing Heat Islands. <u>Learn more and register</u>. *Wednesday, February 1, 10:00 a.m. – 11: 00 a.m.* Findings of the 2022 MA Climate Change Assessment. <u>Learn more and register</u>.

#### Farm Succession Planning Webinar Series

Wednesdays January 18, 15, February 1, 8, 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. In this free **webinar, transitioning farmers** and **new generation farmers** will learn the basics of farm succession planning, how to get started, and where to find support. Resources, tips, financial and legal considerations, and more will be provided. Family members, farm partners, unrelated successors, and all generations are encouraged to attend together. Learn more and register.

#### UMassAmherst 2023 Invasive Insect Webinar Series

UMass Extension

Wednesdays in January & February, 9:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. This free webinar series, supported by two UMass Extension programs, focuses on the impact, monitoring, and management of invasive insects in Massachusetts and the nation. <u>Learn more and register</u>.

#### Save the Date: 2023 RISCC Symposium

*Tuesday & Wednesday, February 14 & 15, 11:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.* The Northeast Regional Invasive Species & Climate Change (RISCC) Management Network aims to reduce the compounding effects of invasive species and climate change by synthesizing relevant science, sharing the needs and knowledge of managers, building stronger scientist-manager communities, and conducting priority research. The network includes invasion scientists, climate scientists, natural resource managers, policymakers, and stakeholders from the broader public. If you're new to RISCC and the symposium, you can read about past symposiums <u>here</u> to get an idea of what to expect.

# Save the Date: LTA's Ninth Symposium on Advanced Legal Topics in Land Conservation

Thursday & Friday, June 8 & 9



Registration for this online event opens in April. Experts will cover the latest conservation law developments, and offer practical solutions by identifying strategies for purchased easement and land transactions with public partners, right of privacy in stewardship, timber trespass enforcement, ethical and practice considerations for inside and outside counsel, strategies for adaptation and changing circumstances, and offer a deep dive into recent precedent setting cases. Ideal for attorneys, senior conservation practitioners and law school faculty. Stay informed on the latest conservation law developments and practical solutions. Learn more.

## In Person Events and Outings

#### **Farm Succession School for Senior Farmers**

Thursdays January 26, March 2, March 3, 9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., Fiske Public Library, 110 Randall Road, Wrentham, MA

This curriculum is designed to help farmers think through the many aspects of succession planning, clarify vision and goals, get next steps on paper, and review necessary documents to provide for a smooth transition. Sessions include ample time to share and learn from other farmers facing similar questions. There will be homework and assistance available between sessions. Farmers do not need to have an identified successor to participate. Learn more and register.

#### **DCR Winter Universal Access Program**

The <u>winter Universal Access Program</u> (UAP) offers adaptive, accessible programming like skiing, hiking, snowshoeing, sledding, and skating at state parks and rinks. Partners <u>All</u> <u>Out Adventures, Easterseals Massachusetts, Holyoke Rows</u>, and <u>Waypoint Adventure</u> run the programs. Structured programs feature adaptive equipment, professional staff, and instruction and support. Friends, family members, and companions are encouraged to take part alongside participants.

#### Save the Date! 2023 Massachusetts Land Conservation Conference

Saturday, March 25, in person at Worcester Technical High School and Friday, April 28,

field trips around the state.

#### Grants

#### **National Fish Passage Program**

Letter of Intent deadline: Friday, December 16

Selected projects will address outdated, unsafe or obsolete dams, culverts, levees and other barriers that fragment rivers and streams. Applicants must work with a Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office Biologist to be considered for funding. To begin the process, submit a Letter of Intent to your Regional Fish Passage Coordinator by December 16. Contact a Regional Fish Passage Coordinator to get started. Learn more.

#### **Neighborhood Outreach Project – Request for Proposals**

Application deadline: rolling, though applying in the fall is strongly recommended Landowner decisions are often guided by the advice and stories of friends and neighbors. The goal of this grant is to use social networks to help inform landowner decisions about the future of their land. This grant is intended for areas with significant forest cover. Past projects include direct mailings to high-priority landowners, workshops, potlucks, site visits, and individualized follow-up with interested landowners. Municipal boards, land trusts, conservation organizations, neighborhood associations, natural resource professionals, and conservation partnerships are encouraged to apply. Activities must be completed no later than April 15, 2023. <u>Details and to apply</u>. Questions? Contact Sarah Wells at wells@mountgrace.org or 978-541-1773.

#### Land Conservation Networking Mini Grants

Application deadline: rolling, though applying in the fall is strongly recommended Recognizing that many land conservation projects require partnerships among community leaders and other conservation partners, this mini grant program focuses on creating intentional opportunities for networking and relationship building. The ideal proposal will bring together people from a shared geography to build or strengthen relationships in service of community conservation. Maximum grant is \$700. Learn more and to apply. Questions? Contact Sarah Wells at <u>wells@mountgrace.org</u> or 978-541-1773.

#### **Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Planning Grant**

Application deadline: Friday, January 6, 4:00 p.m.

This grant is for municipalities who want to assess their vulnerability to, and prepare for, climate change impacts, build community resilience, and receive designation from the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) as a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) program municipality. Learn more and apply.

#### **Drinking Water Supply Protection Grants**

Info session: sign up by Monday, January 9; takes place Wednesday, January 11, 1:00 p.m. via MS Teams. Email <u>vanessa.farny@mass.gov</u> to get the link.

Application deadline: Friday, March 10, 3:00 p.m.

The Drinking Water Supply Protection Grant Program provides financial assistance for the purchase of land in existing Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)-approved drinking water supply protection areas, or land in estimated protection areas of identified and planned future water supply wells or reservoirs. Grants of up to \$350,000 are available. Learn more. Apply.

#### MAPC Technical Assistance Program (TAP)

#### Application deadline: Monday, January 16

TAP grants allow municipalities to work with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) on a diverse range of projects to advance shared local, regional, and state goals. Preferred projects include multi-community impact, advancing racial equity, and COVID recovery and resilience. Learn more and apply.

#### Expression of Interest (EOI) for FY24 MVP Action Grants

Deadline: Friday, January 20 (to receive feedback on the EOI); Friday, February 3 (for limited feedback)

Though completing an EOI form for an MVP Action Grant project idea is not mandatory to submit an application for the MVP grant (tentatively available March 2023), it is strongly encouraged. Note that submitting an EOI does not guarantee that a project will be funded. About \$20 million will be available to fund FY24 Action Grants. Action Grants provide financial assistance to municipalities seeking to undertake priority climate adaptation

actions to address climate change impacts resulting from extreme weather, sea level rise, inland and coastal flooding, severe heat, and other climate impacts. <u>More info and EOI</u> <u>form</u>.

#### Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Grants

Application deadline: Monday, January 23, 3:00 p.m.

LWCF grants provide financial assistance to municipalities and the state's Departments of Conservation and Recreation and Fish and Game for the acquisition of parkland, development of a new park, renovation of an existing park, development of trails in an existing conservation or recreation area, or the acquisition of conservation land. Grants up to \$1,000,000 are available. To receive the information webinars link, RSVP to Melissa Cryan at melissa.cryan@mass.gov. Learn more and apply here.

#### Landscape Partnership Grants

Info sessions: Thursday, January 26, 2:00 p.m. in person at MassWildlife Field Headquarters in Westborough, MA; Monday, Monday, January 30, 10:00 a.m. via MS Teams

Deadline: Monday, April 17, 3:00 p.m.

Landscape Partnership Grants provide financial assistance for the protection of large blocks of conservation lands that promote ecological integrity and connectivity as well as promote local farm and forest economies. Funding for park or playground development is also available to towns of less than 7,000 residents. Applications must be submitted jointly by partners representing a minimum of two eligible categories of applicant and must achieve protection for the minimum contiguous acreage identified in the bid document. Note the FY23 grant program includes a change to the minimum contiguous acreage required of eligible projects; minimum acreage ranges from 100-500 acres, depending upon the County in which the project is located. Advance registration required for both sessions. Contact <u>vanessa.farny@mass.gov</u> to register.

#### **Conservation Partnership Grants**

Application deadline: Wednesday, February 1, 3:00 p.m.

Conservation Partnership Grants assist non-profit organizations in acquiring conservation land in fee or via a conservation restriction, as well as assistance with due diligence costs associated with gifts. Questions? Contact Melissa Cryan at <u>melissa.cryan@mass.gov</u>. <u>Learn</u>

more and apply. Sponsored by the MA Division of Conservation Services (DCS).

# Federal Highway Administration National Culvert Removal, Replacement, and Restoration Grants

#### Application deadline: Monday, February 6

This grant provides funding for culvert projects that improve or restore habitat access for sea run (anadromous) fish species. Municipalities, states and tribes are eligible to apply. Because of its focus on improving habitat for specific fish stocks, interested applicants should review the program details carefully to evaluate whether their project fits. Learn more and apply.

#### **Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund (MPPF) Grants**

#### Application deadline: Friday, March 17

Administered by the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC), the MPPF is a statefunded 50% matching grant reimbursement program to support the preservation of properties, landscapes, and sites listed in the State Register of Historic Places. Applicants must be a municipality or nonprofit organization. It's highly recommended to attend an info session prior to applying. Learn more and apply (dates of info sessions are included on that page).

#### **Conservation Assistance for Small Communities Grant Program**

#### Application deadline: Friday, May 5

This grant provides funding for towns with 7,000 people or fewer for the preparation of real property appraisals, Open Space & Recreation Plans (OSRPs), and other planning in support of land conservation and recreation. Learn more and apply.

#### Hammond Climate Solutions Solar Moonshot Program

The Solar Moonshot Program helps nonprofit organizations across the United States afford the switch to clean energy. Grants up to \$25,000 are typically awarded, with amounts dependent upon various factors, including the organization's need for funding. Priority is given to solar projects that have additional funding sources and community support. Learn more and apply on the <u>Hammond Climate Solutions website</u>. Several Massachusetts projects have been funded.

#### **Massachusetts Environmental Justice Strategy Public Listening Sessions**

These public listening sessions are meant to gather information relevant to the development of the draft Environmental Justice Strategy. The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) seeks the public input on approaches that are likely to be successful, identify strategies that were missed, and highlight practices that may fall short of mutual goals to establish a more just and equitable commonwealth. Dates and learn more.

#### **MDAR Mapping Data Input and Information – Request for Information**

#### Deadline: Friday, January 13

MDAR is looking for information and potential partners to review the food system mapping needs (GIS) in Massachusetts. They want to learn what information exists and what would be useful to be mapped to help advance the work of food system stakeholders and organizations for the potential development of a statewide food system mapping project. Learn more. Questions? Contact Keri Cornman at keri.cornman@mass.gov.

#### Making Refuge: A Paid Fellowship with Knoll Farm and First Light

#### Application deadline: Monday, January 30, 5:00 p.m.

Period: April 1 – October 31, 2023. Some travel from Vermont to Maine required. Two Fellowships are available; couples are encouraged to apply. In broad terms, the Fellows will learn what it takes to Make Refuge in terms of physical and emotional skills, and to create a physical place where people across class, race, and age feel welcomed, inspired, and can see some of their own story there. Fellows will work alongside Peter Forbes and the Knoll Farm community. Knoll Farm is a working family farm near Waitsfield, VT, a national refuge for organizers working in social justice, and a creative learning space for dozens of organizations. It also stewards <u>Dickinsons Reach</u>, a remote refuge deep within the Passamaquoddy country of Downeast, Maine. Ideal candidates will already have a vision for their lives that includes working seasonally, and bring previous experience as guides, group leaders, teachers, and instructors who know this lifestyle and seek a social justice lens and the experience gained working alongside an experienced mentor. <u>Learn</u> more and apply.

#### **Massachusetts Coordinated Soil Health Program**

Through the implementation of cover crops, no-till, nutrient management, and other management practices, soil health can be improved, as can resiliency to climate change and farm viability. This program is currently for Massachusetts produce and dairy farmers, both organic and conventional. The program offers a Farmer Consultant Program, as well as tools for transitioning to no-till vegetable production, mini-grants, and networking and learning opportunities. Learn more here and here.

#### **One-on-One Farm Succession Advising**

Land for Good's field agents offer one-on-one advising to help New England farmers start, continue or complete their farm succession plan. Low or no-cost assistance is available. Costs vary depending on needs and available funding, with always a sliding scale option. Complete the Farm Succession Form or call 603-357-1600 to initiate a no-cost informational session.

#### Helpful Guides from WeConservePA

Our colleagues at WeConservePA, the state association of Pennsylvania land trusts, maintain an excellent library of guides that are helpful to land trusts. While some are specific to Pennsylvania, many have broad applicability. The newest guides include:

• Restricted Gifts: Issues to Consider Before Making or Taking a Gift for a Specific

Purpose: A conservation organization soliciting a gift for a specific purpose, or a donor willing to give only for a specific purpose, may create a restricted gift, which limits —sometimes severely—the organization's discretion in managing the gift. This guide encourages organizations to strongly limit restricted gifts, and details numerous reasons why with relevant examples.

• <u>Optimizing Direct Mail Fundraising Appeals</u>: Letters can still be an effective fundraising tool for nonprofits, even in this internet age. This collection of resources represents a wide range of best practices collected from professional experiences working in development and fundraising for the nonprofit sector and conservation community.

#### Webinar Recording: Preparing for Natural Disasters

Learn how land trusts can navigate and access FEMA programs. From Land Trust Alliance. <u>View here</u>.

#### Webinar Recordings: Building Ownership for Land Trusts

Our colleagues at the Connecticut Land Conservation Council hosted these two webinars, some ideas of which could be informative for Massachusetts land trusts. <u>Roundtable on Buildings, Offices, and HQs</u> (11/2/2022) - What should your land trust consider?

<u>Preserving Historic Buildings</u> (11/16/2022) - A primer on historic preservation, restoration, designations, and funding with Preservation CT.

#### **Volunteer Program Training**

Service Enterprise is a nationally recognized certification program that provides a holistic training-based curriculum for volunteer engagement. Massachusetts Service Alliance (MSA) has been running this certification program for nine years, and has certified almost 70 nonprofits in Massachusetts as Service Enterprises, including Sudbury Valley Trustees. Learn more.

#### **Participate in a National Survey of Natural Resource Managers**

The University of Florida is conducting a national survey of natural resource managers to better understand how scientific information is incorporated into management decisions. Please consider taking this 10-15 minute <u>survey</u> by December 31. For questions, or if additional members of your organization are willing to take this, contact <u>rmckee@ufl.edu</u>.

#### **Resistance, Resilience, and Transformation Resource**

This new <u>concise publication</u> provides an overview of climate adaptation actions across a spectrum of categories, including example projects in a range of ecosystems. This tool may be helpful to a range of people, from those new to climate adaptation to seasoned practitioners looking to better communicate how their work fits into the bigger picture.

#### Southern Worcester County Trail Hub Looking for Input

If you manage trails, the SWCT is looking for your feedback on this new interactive trail

location tool. If you see something missing or wrong with trail lines or data, or if you need help mapping your own trails, contact SWCT using the respective buttons on <u>this webpage</u>. Even if you don't manage trails, use the tool to find a trail to explore.

## Jobs

Post your job openings on the MassLand self-serve <u>Job Board</u>! Add one anytime. View more jobs on our <u>Job Board</u>.

Capacity Building Branch Manager – MA Division of Ecological Restoration

<u>Land Protection Specialist Metro Boston and Central MA</u> – Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)

<u>Land Protection Specialist, CT River Valley</u> – Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)

<u>Restoration Technical Services Branch Manager</u> – MA Division of Ecological Restoration

Trails and Preserves Manager – Steep Rock Association

Steward Harvard, MA – The Trustees

Community Outreach and Events Coordinator- Boston MA - The Trustees

#### **Our Contact Information** \*{{Organization Name}}\*

- \*{{Organization Address}}\*
- \*{{Organization Phone}}\*
- \*{{Organization Website}}\*

\*{{Unsubscribe}}\*



MASSACHUSETTS LAND TRUST COALITION