



MASSACHUSETTS LAND TRUST COALITION

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Inspire your peers! We invite land trusts around the state to submit a brief item describing a recently closed land protection project or other conservation success to be featured in MassLand E-News. An accompanying photo and/or map is encouraged (jpg format preferred). We also feature selected outings and events, so send us any listings you'd like to promote.

Please send submissions to info@massland.org.

Thank you for subscribing to MassLand E-News! To support our efforts to inform and connect the Massachusetts land conservation community, please consider making a [tax-deductible donation](#). Thank you!

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MassLand News

2020 Massachusetts Land Conservation Conference Webinars

The in-person conference planned for March 28 was cancelled, but thanks to the generosity of conference sponsors, several conference sessions will be presented in a series of webinars in April and May. The webinars are free to attend. Learn more and register [here](#). Sessions include:

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Getting Outside During COVID-19

Getting out on the trails can be a great way to clear your mind, reduce stress, and enjoy the unfolding spring. Mindful of Massachusetts' stay-at-home order and with a focus on our collective health and well-being, MLTC encourages you to [stay local and proceed with care and caution](#) when you head outdoors. Many popular reservations are closed at this time (including as of this writing those operated by [Mass Audubon](#) and [The Nature Conservancy in Massachusetts](#)) while others have experienced a surge of visitors that can make it challenging to maintain appropriate social distance. The Trustees [recently reopened selected reservations](#) where they felt localized and safe usage could be managed. Please check [your local land trust's website](#) and those of municipal reservations for latest updates before heading out. While MassWildlife offices are closed, state Wildlife Management Areas are open and hunting and fishing regulations remain in effect; click [here](#) for details. For latest information on State Parks, Forests and Beaches, visit the State's website [here](#). If you find a conservation area crowded when you arrive, consider visiting another area or returning at a less busy time. Some practical trail etiquette includes for downhill hikers to step as far off the trail as they safely can to yield to those going uphill. For the time being, it would also be helpful for all users of loop trails to proceed in a clockwise direction to reduce interactions.

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Success Spotlight

Franklin Land Trust: Gill Conservation Restriction



Richard French and Emily Samuels donated a conservation restriction (CR) on a 58-acre wood lot overlooking Barton's Cove along the Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway, or Route 2 as it is more commonly known. Dick French has owned and managed the lot for timber since purchasing it in 2011 and wished to conserve the land so it will always be available for long term forestry growth as well as supporting the diverse wildlife, including songbirds, that frequent the property's deep forest and shrubby habitat. The tall white pines and hardwoods are being managed in anticipation of one day storing their carbon as window frames or flooring boards created in Dick's sawmill at his family farm down the road. Dick and Emily donated their first agricultural preservation restriction in Gill to Franklin Land Trust (FLT) in 1992 and were instrumental in working with FLT to creating the 162-acre Gill Town Forest in 2007. Photo credit: Dick French.

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Policy

Making the Case for the CLTC

On February 26, MLTC President Buzz Constable, MLTC Steering Committee Vice Chair Lisa Vernegaard and Emily Myron of The Nature Conservancy met with State Senate President Karen Spikla to urge her support for legislation to expand the Conservation Land Tax Credit (CLTC) program. This popular program offers tax credits of up to \$75,000 to Massachusetts landowners who donate land for conservation. Pending legislation would address a backlog of land conservation projects by raising the annual cap on available tax credits.

LTA Lobby Days Go Virtual

On March 30 and April 1, MLTC's Executive Director Robb Johnson and President Buzz

Constable joined fellow advocates Linda Orel, Colin Novick, Kritin DeBoer, Ray Lyons and Laura Johnson for a series of conference calls with the D.C. Offices of Senator Markey, Senator Warren, Representative McGovern, Representative Kennedy, Representative Trahan, Representative Pressley and Representative Moulton to encourage their support for The Great American Outdoors Act (S. 3422) which would permanently fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and the Charitable Conservation Easement Program Integrity Act (S. 170), which would halt abuse of the conservation easement program by bad actors claiming grossly inflated charitable deductions.

Revised Board Practices during COVID-19

On Friday April 3, 2020, Governor Baker signed into law emergency provisions that will permit nonprofits organized in the Commonwealth to adapt their governance practices to the unique challenges posed by the current COVID-19 crisis. Among other things, permitting members to meet remotely and vote by proxy, unless the nonprofit's articles of organization expressly prohibit this. The emergency provisions will be effective for the duration of the Governor's March 10, 2020 state of emergency and for 60 days thereafter. For more information see Section 16 [here](#).

Deadlines for Responding to Withdrawal from Ch. 61/61A/61B Temporarily Extended

On April 3, Governor Baker signed Chapter 53 of the Acts of 2020 into law: "An Act to Address Challenges Faced by Municipalities and State Authorities Resulting from COVID-19". Section 9 of the new legislation extends the times for cities and towns to respond to notices of the sale/conversion of agricultural/forestry/recreation land held under Ch. 61/61A/61B that trigger purchase options for 90 days after the termination of the Governor's March 10, 2020 state of emergency declaration.

Act to Provide Protection for Old Growth Forests

Sourced from Mass Audubon

A Mass Audubon-supported bill that would provide protection to old-growth trees in Massachusetts awaits approval by the Senate Committee on Ways and Means. If it receives approval, H.736, An Act Relative to the Protection of Old Growth Forests, would move to the House and Senate floor to be voted on. This bill would protect old-growth forests from logging, require an inventory of state-owned forests to evaluate old-growth forest stands, and establish a research and education program to promote understanding of old-growth forest reserves. Learn more about H.736 [here](#).

EPA Halts Enforcement of Emissions Laws

Sourced from WGBH, March 27

The US Environmental Protection Agency announced a temporary hold on enforcing pollution monitoring and reporting regulations, and will not issue fines or other civil penalties to companies that fail to meet emissions standards in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Environmental groups have stated that this hold is unnecessary as the EPA already has flexibility on enforcement on a case-by-case basis, and this temporary hold creates a dangerous precedent for halting environmental enforcement. Read the press release from the EPA [here](#), and an article about the policy change [here](#).

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Certain Work of Conservation Organizations Deemed Essential

Under Governor Baker's emergency order, businesses and organizations that do not provide "COVID-19 Essential Services" are required to close their physical workplaces and facilities to workers, customers and the public. On March 31, the State revised its list of essential services to clarify that certain conservation work can proceed, whether performed on state, municipal, non-profit or private conservation lands. Specifically, the list now includes, "Workers who support the operation, maintenance and public safety of parks, forests, reservations, conservation restrictions, wildlife management areas, water supply protection lands, and other critical natural resources and open space for passive recreation." Those who undertake such work at this time are urged to practice social distancing precautions.

COVID-19 Resources and Guidance for Businesses and Organizations

Sourced from Mass.gov, April 2

The Baker-Polito Administration has released information on several state and federal programs designed to help nonprofits and small businesses affected by COVID-19. These measures include grants, emergency loans, and tax relief programs. Some of these programs are available to organizations with fewer than 50 employees, while others benefit those with fewer than 500 employees. Learn more about these programs [here](#).

Community Preservation Act Can Help With Rental Assistance

Sourced from Community Preservation Coalition, March 25

In addition to its role in preserving land across the state, the Community Preservation Act (CPA) can be used to help with rental assistance programs in these difficult times. Amendments added to the CPA in 2012 clarify that rental assistance programs are an eligible CPA community housing application. More information on the CPA, and how it can help during the COVID-19 pandemic, can be found [here](#).

New Conservation Restriction Submission Guidelines

Sourced from MA Division of Conservation Services, March 18

The MA Division of Conservation Services has implemented new guidelines for submitting new conservation restrictions (CR). Instead of mailing a physical copy, please submit all CR applications via email to John Gioia (john.gioia@state.ma.us) and Denise Pires (Denise.Pires@mass.gov) with the subject line "New Conservation Restriction Submission." If the accompanying files are too large to attach, please send a link to a Google Drive folder containing the files. If you have recently mailed a physical CR application, please email the form and required materials to ensure it is received. Find more information and the CR application form [here](#).

Climate Change Solutions Simulator

Sourced from Climate Interactive

Understanding the impacts of policies is crucial for developing effective climate-change solutions. En-ROADS is a policy simulation model that explores the consequences of energy, economic, land use, and other policies. This free program, developed by Climate Interactive and MIT Sloan, has been used by a wide range of policy makers, including members of the US Congress, the UN Secretary-General's office, and local community groups. Explore En-ROADS on your own or join free online trainings to learn

more about this simulator [here](#).

Mass Audubon Names New President

Sourced from Mass Audubon, April 7

Mass Audubon has named David O'Neill as its 11th President. Mr O'Neill has served as Chief Conservation Officer and Senior Advisor to the CEO of the National Audubon Society, Vice President at the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Executive Director of the Chesapeake Bay Trust, and Director of Land Use Policy and Outreach for the Urban Land Institute. O'Neill succeeds Gary Clayton, who is retiring after 30 years with Mass Audubon. Read the full press release [here](#).



Department of Ecological Restoration's Annual Report Released

Sourced from the Division of Ecological Restoration, April 1

The Division of Ecological Restoration (DER) has released their 2019 Annual Report, 10 Years of Investing in Nature and Community. This report marks the 10th anniversary of the DER, and celebrates and discusses the work done by the DER and its partners in over 65 restoration projects, including dam removal, wetland restoration, urban river revitalization, and streamflow restoration. In 2019, DER staff engaged with more than 148 communities across the state through trainings, site visits, grants, and projects. Read the report and learn more about the DER's work [here](#).

The Importance of Spending Time Outdoors

Sourced from National Geographic

Spending time in nature can play an important role in unstressing our brains. Researchers across the world are showing that spending time outdoors has clear benefits to our mental health and brain function. Primarily, time spent in nature appears to lower stress, which can reduce blood pressure and heart rates, as well as lead to improvements in creative problem-solving. Learn more [here](#).

Citizen Science Projects You Can Do From Home

Sourced from Mass Audubon

Mass Audubon has a series of opportunities to participate in wildlife research and conservation from your own home. These citizen science projects rely on dedicated individuals and are a great opportunity to participate in conservation research while self isolating. Projects include monitoring bird-window collisions, observing firefly activity in your backyard, and logging bird sightings. Learn more [here](#).

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Workshops and Trainings

Given rapidly evolving responses to the COVID-19 epidemic, please contact event sponsors for latest information on event cancellations.

Trail Maintenance and New Construction Basics -- Mass Audubon

Thursday, May 21, 9:00am - 3:00pm

Broadmoor Wildlife Sanctuary, Natick MA

This workshop will teach land managers, conservation professionals, friends groups and volunteers the best practices in multi-use trail maintenance, construction, and sustainable stewardship. The workshop will have an introductory session followed by a field portion that will include trail maintenance exercises such as trimming and clearing, managing trails with roots and rocks, and trail relocation exercises. Cost is \$75. Learn more [here](#).



Photo Credit: Broadmoor Wildlife Sanctuary

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Webinars & e-Learning

Massachusetts Land Conservation Conference Webinars

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Massachusetts Open Space Conference Webinars

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the in-person Open Space Conference

planned for April 25 has been cancelled. Instead, the Open Space Committee invites members, volunteers, and other people who care about conservation to join a series of webinars based on the workshops planned for the conference. The webinars are free to attend. Learn more and register [here](#).

Sessions include:

- Tuesday, April 14th 4:00 PM to 5:30 PM: Creating Open Space Committees and Keeping Them Alive
- Wednesday, April 15th 12:00 PM to 1:15 PM: Land Protection Basics: How a Community Can Protect Land
- Wednesday, April 22nd (EARTH DAY!) 12:00 PM to 1:15 PM: Stewarding Town Land
- Wednesday, April 29th 12:00 PM to 1:15 PM: Navigating the Community Preservation Act
- Wednesday, May 6th 12:00 PM to 1:15 PM: Outreach to Landowners in Your Community



A Walk in the Garden Webinar Series -- Ecological Landscape Alliance

Each Wednesday, beginning April 15, 12:00 pm

This free series of webinars will offer communal walks through gardens, plant discussions, and gardening inspiration to provide much needed respite as we face limitations on gathering with family and friends and visiting green spaces. Topics in this series will include strange and noteworthy plants, pollinator ecology, and plant design considerations. This webinar series is free, but please register [here](#).

Open Space Planning and Protection Techniques -- Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions

Wednesday, April 15, 6:00pm - 8:30pm

This webinar will discuss the techniques required for open space planning, including establishing goals and objectives, conducting inventories of natural resources, working with landowners, and establishing conservation restrictions. Cost is \$55 for members and \$75 for nonmembers. Learn more [here](#).

Tips and Techniques for Healthy Seedling Starts -- Ecological Landscape Alliance

Saturday, April 18, 10:00am - 1:00pm

This webinar will showcase basic, yet critical, propagation techniques for successful seedling starts. The lesson will start with an overview of propagation terminology and science before a video tour of the greenhouse for hands-on demonstrations. Cost is \$54. Learn more and register [here](#).

Rain Garden Webinar -- Earthwatch Institute

Tuesday, April 21, 12:30 pm

Earthwatch panelists will define and discuss what a rain garden is, how water movement and runoff impacts communities, how to design and care for a rain garden, and steps we can all take to make a difference for the health of our environment. Throughout the workshop, attendees will be encouraged to participate in polls and ask questions. This is an introduction to Green Infrastructure meant for people of all ages and educational backgrounds interested in community action and climate resiliency. Register [here](#).



Conservation Based Estate Planning -- UMass Extension

Tuesday, May 5, 6:30pm - 7:30pm

Your land is part of your legacy. Planning its future will help you reach your personal and financial goals. Protect your legacy by putting a formal plan in place. To get started on a plan, join Paul Catanzaro of UMass for a free webinar on conservation-based estate planning. Participating is easy, simply click [here](#) to at the time of the webinar. To connect to the webinar by phone or use the phone for audio, dial: (646) 876-9923 and enter meeting ID: 617 667 181.

Wetlands Protection Act -- Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions

Tuesday, May 12, 5:45pm - 8:30pm

This introduction to the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act will provide an overview of this important legislation. Topics will include interests of the act, jurisdiction, the requirements for permit submittal, the process of identifying resource areas, and limited projects. Cost is \$55 for members and \$75 for non-members. Learn more and register [here](#).

Parks for Health Online Curriculum -- Institute at the Golden Gate

The Institute at the Golden Gate has launched a new e-learning initiative, Parks for Health, which addresses the health benefits of time spent outside and in parks. Each module in this free, on-demand course addresses a specific topic, such as using nature to build resilience from childhood trauma or access and inclusion for people with mobility disabilities. Access the course [here](#).

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Grants

State Grant Deadlines in light of COVID-19

Sourced from the Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services (DCS) on April 8

If you are a current recipient of a DCS grant, please do all you can to finish your project in the original timeframe. EEA is currently trying to work through options on extending grants that may need to be extended without having an undue impact on our outyear budget. If you are encountering any difficulties with your projects, please be in touch

with Nathaniel Thomas at nathaniel.thomas1@mass.gov for LAND, Landscape Partnership, or Drinking Water Supply Protection grants or Melissa Cryan at melissa.cryan@mass.gov for PARC or Conservation Partnership grants. If you plan on applying for a DCS grant (LAND, PARC, or Conservation Partnership) in the FY21 grant round and are concerned about the viability of your project due to COVID-19, please be in touch with Nathaniel or Melissa as well. Please visit the DCS website as requested in the grant announcement for the most up-to-date information on the grant workshops.

Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Grants Program Request for Responses

The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs anticipates the release of the FY21 Request for Responses (RFRs) for both Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Planning and Action Grants. These grants are designed to help municipalities across the Commonwealth plan and implement climate change resiliency projects. The RFR will be released in late April. Learn more about this grant program [here](#).

Apply for the 2020 Conservation Diversity Fellowship

Deadline: April 15

The Open Space Institute (OSI) is accepting applications for its 2020 Conservation Diversity Fellowship. This is a full-time, one-year paid position that gives recent graduates from diverse backgrounds the opportunity to work with environmental leaders and be involved in meaningful conservation projects. The deadline is April 15. Learn more and apply [here](#).

Culvert Replacement Municipal Assistance Grants -- MA Division of Ecological Restoration

Deadline: May 11

The Division of Ecological Restoration (DER) is seeking proposals from Massachusetts municipalities interested in replacing an undersized, perched, and/or degraded culvert located in an area of high ecological value. The total funding anticipated to be available in FY21 is \$750,000 - \$1,500,000. Funding is to encourage municipalities to replace culverts with better designed crossings that meet improved structural and environmental design standards and climate resiliency criteria. Only projects that intend to meet the goals of the Massachusetts Stream Crossing Standards will be considered for funding. Use of these Standards to design culverts improves river function and access for fish and wildlife, and reduces hazards to public safety, such as flooding, culvert failure, and road washout. Massachusetts municipalities are eligible to apply for funding to support advancing one culvert replacement project toward completion. The deadline for this grant has been extended to May 11. Learn more [here](#).

Massachusetts Urban Agriculture Program -- MA Department of Agricultural Resources

Deadline: May 28

The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) seeks proposals for projects that will advance commercial urban food production in the Commonwealth. MDAR's Urban Agriculture Program is seeking to award grants statewide to promote strategies that will address food insecurity, expand and create new economic opportunities, and increase access to fresh, local produce in urban neighborhoods.

Learn more [here](#).

Climate Smart Agriculture Program -- MA Department of Agricultural Resources

Deadline: June 19

The MA Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) has simplified the application process and linked three of its grant programs together into one application. The Agricultural Climate Resiliency & Efficiencies (ACRE) Program, Agricultural Environmental Enhancement Program (AEEP), and the Agricultural Energy Program (ENER) all work to implement projects that help the agricultural sector adapt to climate change and reduce impacts to natural resources. Learn more and apply [here](#).

LAND and PARC Grant Programs -- Division of Conservation Services

Deadline: July 15

The Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs' Division of Conservation Services is seeking applications to the FY 2021 Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity (LAND) and Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) Grant Programs. The LAND grant program is for municipal conservation commissions looking to protect conservation land. The PARC grant program is for municipalities looking to acquire parkland, renovate existing parks, or develop a new park. Grant workshops are currently scheduled for April 29 at 11:00 am in West Springfield at the DAR office at 64 Century Way, Suite 42 and May 12 at 2:30 pm in Boston at the EEA office at 100 Cambridge Street, 2nd Floor, Conference Room D. Please note that these may change due to the COVID-19 situation. Keep your eyes on the DCS [website](#) for the most up-to-date information on the status of the workshops. If applying to the LAND grant program, please RSVP to Nathaniel Thomas at nathaniel.thomas1@mass.gov. If applying to the PARC grant program, please RSVP to Melissa Cryan at melissa.cryan@mass.gov. For additional information and to apply, click [here](#).

Conservation Partnership Grant Program -- Division of Conservation Services

Deadline: July 20

The Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs' Division of Conservation Services is seeking applications to the FY 2021 Conservation Partnership Grant Program. Conservation Partnership grants are for 501(c)(3) organizations looking for assistance in acquiring land in fee or a conservation restriction, as well as assistance with due diligence costs associated with gifts. Questions on the grant program can be directed to Melissa Cryan at melissa.cryan@mass.gov. For additional information and to apply, click [here](#).

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Jobs

[GIS Coordinator](#) -- MA Department of Agricultural Resources

[Farmland Acquisition Specialist](#) -- MA Department of Agricultural Resources

[Office Administrator](#) -- MA Department of Agricultural Resources

[Seasonal Stewardship Technicians](#) -- Sudbury Valley Trustees

[Summer Ranger Trail Crew](#) -- Martha's Vineyard Land Bank Commission

[Wildlife Biology Intern](#) -- Martha's Vineyard Land Bank Commission

[Tern Restoration Interns](#) -- MA Division of Wildlife & Fisheries

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