



For Immediate Release
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Contact: Wendy Fox
617-626-1453

PATRICK-MURRAY ADMINISTRATION AWARDS
VOLUNTEER FIRE ASSISTANCE GRANTS

\$77,421 will be distributed to 45 communities across the Commonwealth

The Patrick-Murray Administration, through the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), is awarding Volunteer Fire Assistance grants to 45 towns across the Commonwealth. Funding for the 2009 Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) grant program is provided by the United States Department of Agriculture's Forest Service and is administered by DCR's Bureau of Forest Fire Control.

"We are pleased to be able to work in partnership with these towns to increase their fire readiness and protection to both their firefighters and residents," said DCR Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr. "Making the VFA grants available once again to these rural fire departments goes a long way toward protecting the communities and the Commonwealth's forest resources."

DCR awarded funding for wildfire-related projects to the towns of Ashfield, Barre, Berlin, Blackstone, Bolton, Boxford, Boylston, Brimfield, Brookfield, Conway, Dalton, Douglas, Dover, Erving, Freetown, Georgetown, Granby, Hadley, Hardwick, Hawley, Hubbardston, Lanesborough, Leverett, Merrimac, Middleton, Monson, New Salem, Otis, Paxton, Phillipston, Princeton, Royalston, Savoy, Shutesbury, Sterling, Stow, Sturbridge, Sunderland, Sutton, Templeton, Topsfield, Townsend, Warren, Wenham and Westminster.

In addition, every qualifying VFA community will receive one magnetic Wildfire Danger Risk sign for their fire department vehicle or for posting indoors during the open burn permitted season. The signs serve as a notice to the public of the current wildfire danger risk.

The VFA program reimburses non-profit call or volunteer fire departments that provide service primarily to a community with a population of 10,000 or less. Firefighters on call are paid when they are summoned to fight a fire; volunteers are not paid. To qualify for the VFA grants, fire departments must be made up of at least 80 percent call or volunteer firefighters and be recognized as a department under state law.

"A better equipped and prepared fire force is paramount to lessening the risk to wildfire loss," said DCR's Chief Fire Warden David V. Celino.

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS · EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

Department of Conservation and Recreation
251 Causeway Street, Suite 600
Boston MA 02114-2119
617-626-1250 617-626-1351 Fax
www.mass.gov/dcr



Deval L. Patrick
Governor

Timothy P. Murray
Lt. Governor

Ian A. Bowles, Secretary, Executive
Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs

Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., Commissioner
Department of Conservation & Recreation

For more information on the Volunteer Fire Assistance program, visit www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/firecont/vfagrant.htm.

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The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), an agency of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, oversees 450,000 acres of parks and forests, beaches, bike trails, watersheds, dams, and parkways. Led by Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr., the agency's mission is to protect, promote, and enhance our common wealth of natural, cultural, and recreational resources. To learn more about DCR, our facilities, and our programs, please visit www.mass.gov/dcr. Contact us at mass.parks@state.ma.us.