

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS



Department of Agricultural Resources



Dear Agricultural Preservation Program (APR) Applicant,

Thank you for considering an APR on your farmland. An application form and background materials are enclosed. The most basic thresholds for APR eligibility are that you have 1) at least 5 open acres (not including your house lot or other areas to be excluded) and 2) that the land has been in active agricultural use for at least the past three years.

Submitting an application does not obligate you to complete an APR. However, we ask that you have serious intent to follow through before you submit, because staff time and expenses to prepare your project mount up quickly. There will be a number of checkpoints along the way before both parties agree to close an APR restriction.

Your Application must include a complete copy of the APR soils report that you request from NRCS (a list of regional offices and contacts is enclosed). This service is free, but they will need you to accurately identify the boundaries of your land proposed for APR, minus any known exclusions (a dwelling and its lot is a required exclusion). The soils map NRCS provides will be very important in the decision to pursue your project. While you are at the USDA/NRCS/FSA office, you will be asked to complete additional federal forms for APR eligibility.

When we receive your application and the required attachments, we will schedule a site visit to assess the agricultural activity on the land, look at any structures that may be included, clarify boundaries and discuss any questions or concerns you may have.

The Application should be self-explanatory, but the following items will hold things up if not completed:

- Be sure all owners of record sign the Application. The signatures need to be NOTARIZED, so please attach additional signature and notary pages if you have owners who can only respond by mail. This is also a good time to consult others who may have an interest in your decision to pursue an APR. Failure to include children, relatives, key farm employees or farmers who rent your land early in your decision process is a common reason for withdrawal and disappointment later. Make sure you are all on the same page about using the APR tool.
- **Section 8, Question 2** is where you may indicate an “asking price”. Remember that we are only acquiring a restriction on your land to keep it in farming and to prevent residential or commercial development. We are not buying your land as a developer or individual would. We expect you and your successors to derive an agricultural income and enjoyment from the land you own after it is restricted. You retain its agricultural use and value and you can sell it later for that purpose. Agricultural value has increased rapidly in recent years in Massachusetts – especially on prime farm soils.

After a project is nominated, APR values are determined by a very thorough appraisal, and those numbers are reviewed by a second federal appraiser. We cannot pay more than the appraised value for the Restriction, and we are sometimes limited by spending ceilings depending on your soils, land use and proximity to other APRs. We suggest you leave the Section 8, Question 2 answer blank unless there is an absolute number you must have for the restriction to even consider it. If you do have a drop-dead number, let us know early and, depending on staff knowledge of basic values in the area, we may be able to estimate whether or not it makes sense to pursue an APR if it is unlikely to reach that number.

- **We are required by law to send the town a “120 day notice”** that we are considering an APR within their boundaries. This notice includes the tax map information you have supplied on Page 1 of this Application, along with a map of the area under consideration. The town will need to hold an informational session on the project (usually just an item on a regular governance meeting), so that is when the word of your interest is likely to become known to others. No numbers are shared or available at this stage, nor is any town vote taken pro-or con. The town will also receive other communications from us as the project moves along, one of which will ask if they are willing to make a cash contribution to the restriction cost. You can influence this choice positively, and we encourage you to make your case early and use either a town Agricultural Commission (many towns now have one) or the Conservation Commission as your point of entry and support.
- **You need to include a visual depiction of the land proposed for the APR.** This can be a plot plan, survey, tax map(s), aerial photograph or even a detailed sketch. The key is to show us what portions of the land you own are being proposed for restriction – and what is proposed to be excluded. The approximate acreage you indicate as proposed for APR on the plan should match **both** the acreage you listed in the table in Section 7 of the Application **and** the area you asked NRCS to do soils mapping on.

After you have completed your Application, make a copy for your file and send the **notarized ORIGINAL** (along with the other required attachments listed above) to your field agent at the address provided on the next page.

Please call your Field Representative with any questions about the program or the application.

Sincerely,

Ron Hall

Ron Hall, Program Coordinator

APR Program Field Representative Districts

Chris Chisholm, Eastern Massachusetts

Represents all towns in Essex, Middlesex, Norfolk, Bristol, Plymouth, Barnstable Counties and the Islands

(617) 626-1788

Chris.Chisholm@state.ma.us

Michele Padula, Worcester County

Represents all towns in Worcester County

(617) 626-1758

Michele.Padula@state.ma.us

Mailing to Chris or Michele, please, use the Boston Office Address:
Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
251 Causeway Street, Suite 500
Boston, MA 02114

Rick Chandler, Northwestern Massachusetts

All of Franklin County & the Towns of Adams, Cheshire, Chesterfield, Clarksburg, Cummington, Dalton, Florida, Goshen, Hadley, Hancock, Hatfield, Hinsdale, Lanesborough, North Adams, New Ashford, Pelham, Peru, Pittsfield, Plainfield, Savoy, Williamsburg, Williamstown, Windsor, & Worthington.

(413) 548-1905

Rick.Chandler@state.ma.us

Barbara Hopson, Southwestern Massachusetts

All of Hampden County & the Towns of Amherst, Alford, Beckett, Belchertown, Easthampton, Granby, Great Barrington, Huntington, Lee, Lenox, Middlefield, Monterey, Mount Washington, New Malborough, Northampton, Otis, Richmond, South Hadley, Southampton, Stockbridge, Westhampton, Washington, West Stockbridge, Tyringham, Ware, Sandisfield, & Sheffield.

(413) 548-1906

Barbara.Hopson@state.ma.us

Mailing to Rick or Barbara, please, use the Amherst Office Address:
Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
101 University Drive, Suite C-4
Amherst, MA 01002

USDA/NRCS Offices in Western Massachusetts
Most USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices are in the same building
with the NRCS offices if you need to complete income forms

Pittsfield Field Office -Serving Berkshire County

Phone: 413-443-1776, x3
 Fax: 413-448-2617
 78 Center Street, Suite 206
 Pittsfield, MA 01201-6171

Kate M. Parsons	District Conservationist	413-443-1776	kate.parsons@ma.usda.gov
Edward L. Drake	Soil Conservation Tech	413-443-1776	edward.drake@ma.usda.gov

Greenfield Field Office - Serving Franklin County

Phone: 413-772-0384 Ext.3
 Fax: 413-774-4949
 55 Federal Street
 Hayburne Building, Room 290
 Greenfield, MA 01301-2546

Rita Thibodeau	District Conservationist	413-772-0384, Ext. 101	rita.thibodeau@ma.usda.gov
Lisa P. Hall	Soil Conservationist	413-772-0384, Ext. 107	lisa.hall@ma.usda.gov

Hadley Field Office - Serving Hampden and Hampshire counties

Phone: 413-585-1000, x3
 Fax: 413-586-8648
 195 Russell Street
 Suite B6
 Hadley, MA 01035

Vincent R. Snyder	District Conservationist	413-585-1000, Ext. 133	vince.snyder@ma.usda.gov
David Bacon	Soil Conservationist	413-585-1000, Ext. 112	david.bacon@ma.usda.gov

Holden Field Office - Serving Worcester County

Phone: 508-829-4477 x3
 Fax: 508-829-9508
 The Medical Arts Center Building
 52 Boyden Road, Room 100
 Holden, MA 01520-2587

Kathryn Zichelle Sullivan	District Conservationist	508-829-4477 x110	kathryn.zichelle@ma.usda.gov
Kara Burke	Soil Conservationist	508-829-4477, x107	kara.burke@ma.usda.gov
Helen Castles	Soil Conservationist	508-829-4477, x112	helen.castles@ma.usda.gov

Westford Field Office - Serving Essex, Middlesex and Suffolk counties

Phone: 978-692-1904 x3

Fax: 978-392-1305

319 Littleton Road, Suite 205

Westford, MA 01886-4133

Daniel J. Lenthall	District Conservationist	978-692-1904	daniel.lenthall@ma.usda.gov
Stephanie A. Wilsen	Natural Resource Specialist	978-692-1904 x108	stephanie.wilsen@ma.usda.gov

West Wareham Field Office - Serving Bristol, Norfolk and Plymouth counties

Phone: 508-295-5151 Ext 2

Fax: 508-291-2368

15 Cranberry Highway

West Wareham, MA 02576-1504

Leonard R. Reno Jr.	District Conservationist	508-295-5151 x114	len.reno@ma.usda.gov
Greg Cironi	Soil Conservationist	508-295-5151 Ext.	greg.cironi@ma.usda.gov
Lisa Petruski	Soil Conservationist	508-295-5151 x118	Lisa.Petruski@ma.usda.gov
Bernadette I. Taber	Soil Conservationist	508-295-5151 x128	bernadette.taber@ma.usda.gov

Barnstable Field Office - Serving Barnstable, Dukes and Nantucket counties

Phone: 508-771-6476 or 508-771-6518

Fax: 508-771-6509

Office Location:

270 Communications Way, Unit 1G

Hyannis, MA 02601

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 709

Barnstable, MA 02630-0709

Donald W. Liptack	District Conservationist	508-771-6476	donald.liptack@ma.usda.gov
Stephen G. Spear	Soil Conservationist	508-771-6476	stephen.spear@ma.usda.gov