

# Canopy Forestry Forum 2026

Rooted in Resilience

[Register Now](#)

## Schedule of Events\*: March 5, 2026 UMass Amherst

**8:00am - 8:30am:** Registration

**8:00am - 9:00am:** Information Alley and Forestry Office Hours

**9:00am - 9:15am:** Welcome Remarks

**9:15am - 9:30am:** Rooted in Resilience: The State of the Forest – Past, Present, & Future

**9:30am - 10:15am:** Keynote by [Dave King PhD](#)

**10:15am - 10:45am:** Break, Information Alley and Forestry Office Hours

**10:45am - 11:45am:** [Concurrent Breakout Sessions 1](#)

**11:45am - 12:45pm:** Lunch, Information Alley and Forestry Office Hours

**12:45pm - 1:45pm:** [Concurrent Breakout Sessions 2](#)

**1:45pm - 2:15pm:** Break, Information Alley and Forestry Office Hours

**2:15pm - 3:15pm:** [Concurrent Breakout Sessions 3](#)

**3:15pm - 3:35pm:** Closing Remarks

**3:35pm - 4:00pm:** Raffle

*\*Subject to change*

## Concurrent Breakout Sessions 1: 10:45am-11:45am

### Boots on the Ground: A candid look at fieldwork, office work, and everything in between

Forestry careers blend fieldwork, office work, and everything in between. This session offers a candid look at what professionals really do: measuring trees, writing plans, meeting with landowners, and navigating policy. Learn what the workday looks like, the challenges, and the rewards of being a forester today.

#### Speaker(s):

- Joelle Vautour (mod) & Amelia Zani, [State Public Lands / Management Forestry, DCR](#)
- Gabrielle Hardyn, MA Licensed Forester, [Long View Forest, Inc.](#)
- Mark Mueller, Forest Resources Manager, [Hull Forest Products, Inc.](#)
- Jacob Siedel & Paula Uribe, [Private Lands / Service Forestry, DCR](#)

### What's Coming Down the (Mass)Pike? Stressors taking the fast lane across the state

Invasive pests and pathogens don't wait for an invitation, and they move fast. This session explores emerging forest health threats racing across Massachusetts, from insects to fungi. Learn how to spot them early, understand their impacts, and prepare management strategies to protect your woods before it's too late.

#### Speaker(s):

- Mark Falkenberry, [Forest Health Program, DCR](#)

### C-SIP in Action: Opportunities for loggers

The Climate Stewardship Incentive Program (C-SIP) isn't just for landowners—it creates new opportunities for loggers, too. This workshop explores how C-SIP can offer incidental opportunities for additional income, support planting, utilize the bridge mat program, and connect you with other cost-share programs designed to strengthen forestry businesses and practices.

#### Speaker(s):

- Sean Libbey (mod), [Private Lands / Service Forestry, DCR](#)
- Aaron Cardwell, Logger and Mill Owner, Aaron Forestry Services
- Jacob Macko, [Private Lands / Service Forestry, DCR](#)
- Ry Patton, Forester, [Baystate Forestry Services](#)

## For Keeps: Building financial and family resilience in your forest

Between rising costs, aging ownership, and development pressures, many landowners wonder how to keep their forests — financially and within the family. This session brings together experts and peers to share strategies for sustainable income, cost-share opportunities, and long-term legacy planning.

### Speaker(s):

- Alison Wright-Wright (mod), [State Public Lands / Management Forestry, DCR](#)
- Dicken Crane, [Holiday Brook Farm](#)
- Lloyd Crawford, Co-Owner & Operator, [Stump Sprouts Lodge & XC Ski Center](#)
- Jakob Palches, Ranger, [The Ashmere Project at Camp Chesterfield](#)
- Mary Wigmore, Private Consulting Forester, Wigmore Forest Resources

## Balancing Act: Forests with many values

Landowners and managers often juggle competing goals—habitat, carbon, recreation, aesthetics, and more. This session explores how passive and active management can complement one another, offering flexible pathways to resilient forests. Through shared experiences and case studies, participants will learn how others choose management approaches that reflect both values and ecological needs.

### Speaker(s):

- Paul Catanzaro, [Professor & State Extension Forester, UMass, Amherst](#)

## Concurrent Breakout Sessions 2: 12:45pm-1:45pm

### Mapping Your Future: GIS for early careers

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) are powerful tools for today's foresters and natural resource professionals. This session introduces how GIS is used in mapping, planning, and decision-making, with a focus on skills and resources early-career professionals can use to build confidence and strengthen their career path.

### Speaker(s):

- Rich MacLean, Quabbin Watershed Forester, [DCR Watershed Forestry Program](#)
- Jack Nessen, GIS Manager, [Mass Audubon](#)
- Erica Poisson, Watershed GIS Director, [DCR Watershed GIS](#)

## Inside the Native Land Conservancy: Land care in action

Leah Hopkins (Narragansett Tribe), DCR's Indigenous People's Partnership Coordinator, will facilitate a conversation with Chief Earl Mills Jr. and Dr. Diana Ruiz of the Native Land Conservancy. The discussion will explore the benefits of working directly with Indigenous partners in forest stewardship, co-management, cultural respect easements, and legacy planning.

### Speaker(s):

- Leah Hopkins (mod), Indigenous People's Partnership Coordinator, [DCR](#)
- Chief Earl Mills Jr. (Mashpee Wampanoag), Land Care Manager, [Native Land Conservancy](#)
- Dr. Diana Ruiz, Executive Director, [Native Land Conservancy](#)

## Doing More with Less: Practical, low-cost habitat improvements for your woods

Whether you have 10 acres or 100 acres discover practical, low-cost strategies to improve wildlife habitat on your land. From selective thinning to leaving brush piles, learn how small, intentional actions can create big benefits for birds, pollinators, and forest health—without stretching your budget.

### Speaker(s):

- Matt DiBona, Director of Land Stewardship, [Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust](#)
- Tom Lautzenheiser, Senior Conservation Ecologist, Central/West Region, [Mass Audubon](#)
- Tom Wansleben, Habitat Biologist, [Department of Fish and Game, Division of Wildlife MassWildlife Habitat Management](#)

## Win-Win: Implementing landscape conservation to promote forest resilience and recover forest birds

Forest resilience and wildlife conservation are not mutually exclusive, nor do they stop at the property line. This session explores how landowners, foresters, and conservation partners can collaborate across boundaries to improve forests at the landscape scale. Learn about the importance of working at the landscape scale, planning and implementing regional projects, funding opportunities, and how scaling up strengthens both ecological and community resilience.

### Speaker(s):

- Jeff Larkin, [Distinguished Professor of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation, Indiana University of Pennsylvania](#); Forest Bird Habitat Advisor, [American Bird Conservancy](#)

## Concurrent Breakout Sessions 3: 2:15pm-3:15pm

### Why C-SIP Matters: Expanding access and advancing climate stewardship

What if stewardship choices could shape climate resilience, not just respond to stress? This session introduces the Climate Stewardship Incentive Program (C-SIP), which lowers financial and technical barriers to forest management. Learn who's eligible, what practices are supported, and how cost-share funding turns intention into on-the-ground resilience across Massachusetts forests.

#### Speaker(s):

- Michelle Nikfarjam, Program Manager, Land and Food Sovereignty, [Pocasset Pokanoket Land Trust \(PPLT\)](#)
- Mike Barry, Private Forest Lands Director, [Private Lands / Service Forestry, DCR](#)
- Mike Downey, [Private Lands / Service Forestry, DCR](#)

### Forests for Fish: Linking Woods, Water, and Resilience

Forests for Fish brings together forestry and fisheries management to address the challenges facing cold-water streams and their surrounding forests. This session highlights how active woodland stewardship—like invasive species control, planting native riparian species, and managing forest cover—can strengthen habitat, resilience and forest value. Adding stream restoration practices makes forest management a powerful tool to reduce pressures of climate change on wildlife and community infrastructure.

#### Speaker(s):

- Emily Boss, Executive Director, [MA Woodlands Institute](#); Community Conservation Manager, [Franklin Land Trust](#)
- Pia D. Martin II, Community Program Coordinator, [MA Woodlands Institute](#)
- Erin Rodgers, Ph.D., Program Manager, [Trout Unlimited](#)
- Will Sloan Anderson, Director of Land Stewardship, [Franklin Land Trust](#)
- Becca Smith, Events and Membership Coordinator, [Franklin Land Trust](#)

### Passing the Torch: Practical paths and peer wisdom for landowners

From estate planning to ownership transitions, forest succession comes with tough decisions—and powerful stories. This session blends practical advice with peer learning,

offering space for landowners to share experiences and explore creative ways to keep forests cared for and connected across generations, communities, and changing circumstances.

Speaker(s):

- Paul Catanzaro, [Professor & State Extension Forester, UMass, Amherst](#)
- Landowner(s) TBD

### Words that Work: Designing messaging that connects

Explore how to translate complex forestry concepts into messaging that resonates with diverse audiences—from landowners to legislators. Learn practical strategies for clear language, engaging visuals, and storytelling that inspires action in forestry and natural resources. This session emphasizes real-world communication tactics, including framing, tone, and audience-driven messaging.

Speaker(s):

- Doug Brown, Director of Stewardship, [Berkshire Natural Resources Council](#)
- Marie Rockett, Executive Creative Director, [Argus](#)
- Jack Saul, Executive Director & Publisher, [Center for Northern Woodlands Education](#)