



Department of Conservation
and Recreation

Fall 2020

Conservation Connections

DCR's first CR Stewardship Newsletter!

Dear Friends,

Over the past few years the Massachusetts Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR) has been expanding its Conservation Restriction (CR) Stewardship Program and reaching out to connect and build relationships with landowners. We are proud to say we have been in touch with each and every one of you in these past four years!

During this time many of you expressed the need for more communication from DCR — and we heard you! We are excited to announce that this is the first issue of a new bi-annual newsletter for all landowners with DCR CRs. Our newsletters will be filled with information relevant to you, such as grant & funding opportunities, land management information, and program updates.

We want to make sure this newsletter is valuable to you, so if you have any suggestions or information that you'd like to see included in an upcoming newsletter please don't hesitate to reach out. My contact information is on the lower left of this page.

We look forward to seeing you on a site visit sometime soon.

Happy Fall!

Felicia Bakaj, *CR Stewardship Coordinator*

**The newsletter for
owners of land
protected by a
Conservation
Restriction (CR) held
by the Department of
Conservation and
Recreation (DCR)**

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CONTACT

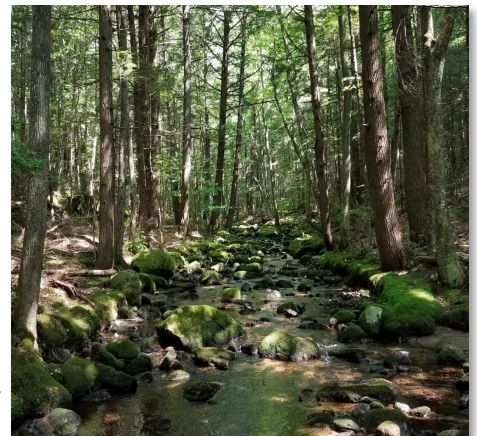
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What is a Conservation Restriction?

A Conservation Restriction (CR) is a land protection tool that permanently protects important conservation values of a property, while allowing the landowner to continue to privately own and use their land.

It is a permanent interest in a property, recorded at the Registry of Deeds, and represents a legally binding agreement that ensures the land is protected through all subsequent changes in property ownership.

CRs protect important resources such as working forested or agricultural lands, wildlife habitat, historically significant features, or large blocks of undeveloped landscapes, while, in many cases, also providing public access for compatible outdoor recreation.



Funding Opportunities for Landowners

Forest Stewardship Cost-Share Program

The DCR's Forest Stewardship Program supports a property owner's desire to practice long-term guardianship of their woodlands. Working on a ten-year Forest Stewardship Plan (FSP) with a Massachusetts Licensed Forester offers an excellent opportunity to learn more about your woodland and can help guide your management decisions.



DCR Service Forestry has a cost-share program to help out with the cost of completing FSPs. Properties with state-held CRs are eligible to apply to the cost-share program for:

New Forest Stewardship Plans

Forest Stewardship Plan Renewal

Foresters for the Birds – A Massachusetts Licensed Forester certified in conducting Bird Habitat Assessments will assess your woods for existing and potential bird habitat. The assessment will be integrated into your efforts toward other goals such as improving forest health, generating income, or enhancing recreational trails. These recommendations will then be incorporated into your FSP.

The application is available online at the [Forest Stewardship Program](#) website under “Forest Stewardship Cost Share Application”. If you are interested, please work with your forester to send in this cost-share application, but note that it *must* be approved by DCR Service Forestry before you begin developing your plan.

MassWildlife Habitat Management Grants

Application Deadline: October 16, 2020

(Project Completion Deadline: June 30, 2021)

The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MassWildlife) Habitat Management Grant Program (MHMGP) was developed to encourage landowners to engage in active habitat management on their properties to maximize the benefit to the various wildlife species of the state.

This program is only open to owners of protected land (including land with CRs) in Massachusetts. The money is given to do habitat management to:

- ◆ Improve habitat for game species (those species that can be legally hunted, fished, or trapped in MA)
- ◆ Manage habitat for Species of Greatest Conservation Need, with special emphasis on State-Endangered and State-Threatened Species
- ◆ Expand recreational opportunities for hunting, fishing, trapping, and other wildlife associated recreation on conserved land.

Applicants can receive \$10,000-\$50,000 per grant. This is an annual reimbursement program & there is no grantee match requirement. Sign up for the [MassWildlife newsletter](#) for the announcement of this & other funding opportunities.

Examples of projects that might be funded by this grant include: mowing or brush hogging of a field, control of invasive plants, prescribed burning, woodland improvements (thinning, cutting, or girdling of trees), planting trees/plants beneficial to wildlife, or nest site creation/nest structure installation.

Before applying for this grant, please consult with Felicia Bakaj, CR Stewardship Coordinator, to make sure that your CR allows the land management practices you have in mind. More information about the grant can be found at [MassWildlife Habitat Management Grant Program](#).

More Grant, Funding and Project Opportunities

MassTrails – Partner with a local non-profit or municipality to apply for a grant for a recreational trail or shared use pathway project. More information can be found here at [MassTrails Grants](#).

Division of Ecological Restoration (DER) Projects — DER selects wetland, river and flow restoration projects through a state-wide, competitive process. DER chooses high-priority projects that bring significant ecological and community benefits. More information can be found at [Become a DER Priority](#).

MA Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) – MDAR offers a variety of grants supporting agricultural projects. More information can be found here at the [Department of Agricultural Resources website](#).



Before applying for any of these grants, please consult with Felicia Bakaj, CR Stewardship Coordinator, to make sure that your CR allows the land management practices you have in mind.

Nature Corner

Opossums

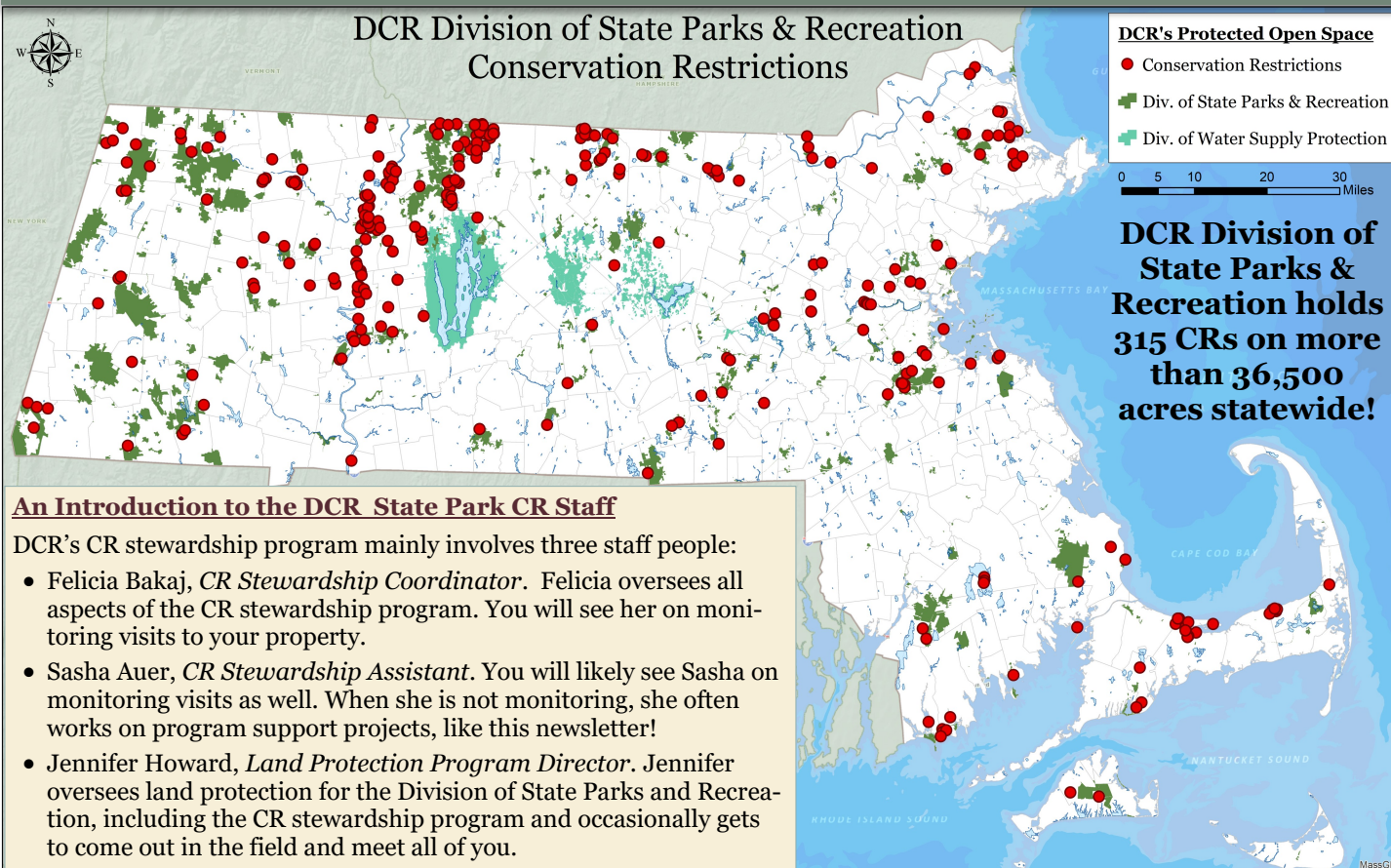
When people think of marsupials (animals that carry young in a pouch), they usually think of Australia's kangaroos and koalas. Did you know that North America also has its very own marsupial? The Virginia Opossum, generally known as a possum, is found in Canada, the U.S. and Central America.

When threatened, they may roll over and “play dead,” drooling and foaming at the mouth, causing some people to think they are rabid. However, opossums rarely get rabies, likely due to their low body temperature, and in general are not a threat to humans.

They can be found in a variety of habitats, including woodlands and farmlands, but prefer to be near water including swamps or marshes. They den in brush piles, abandoned burrows, hollow logs, and tree cavities and have also adapted well to more urban environments, sometimes denning under porches or in attics and sheds. Many CR-protected properties have excellent habitat for opossums.



Photo by Monica R.



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Conservation Connections is produced semi-annually for owners of land protected by a DCR-held Conservation Restriction.

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