



Department of Conservation
and Recreation

Spring 2022

Conservation Connections

DCR Land Protection Program News

Dear Friends,

Spring is such an amazing time to be outside in nature. The sound of peepers peeping and birds singing, and the flowers and leaves painting the landscape with vibrant colors once again brings great joy and renewal. And we can't forget the pollinating insects that emerge or return in spring including the many native bees that are so important to biodiversity in MA (see page 3).

We have some big changes to share with you as well. Earlier this year Felicia Bakaj, the CR Stewardship Program Coordinator, accepted a new position as the Land Protection Coordinator with DCR's Division of Water Supply Protection. Felicia joined the Stewardship Program in 2016 and was instrumental in its development over the last few years. Her passion for land conservation and for connecting with landowners across the state has been a significant contribution to the success of this program. We will miss her greatly and wish her well on her next endeavor! We are currently in the process of hiring a new coordinator who will start later this spring.

In other news, the Land Protection Team is working hard to conserve lands across the state, and hopes to protect more than 1,500 additional acres by the end of June. This includes land that will be protected by CRs in Hubbardston, Leominster, and Hawley.

We hope you have been enjoying the articles in our newsletter thus far. Please reach out if you have any suggestions for future articles.

CR Stewardship Program Staff

Forest Management and Climate Resiliency

Given the current predictions for climate change and how it will affect forestland in MA, you may have been wondering what you can do to manage your forested land in a way that will ensure the forest's continued health and vigor.

Predictions for MA forecast wetter, milder winters, more intense storms, and more severe drought conditions between storms. Forest habitat types will vary widely in how they will be affected by climate change, but some trees and forests will undoubtedly be more vulnerable in the future.



Blackburnian Warbler by Aaron Maizlish

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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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Forest Climate Resiliency Cont. from Page 1

Here we provide some resources and a brief overview of some of the actions you can take to make your forested land less vulnerable to climate change stressors. Each property will have different soil, topography, plant species, hydrology etc. and therefore management considerations will be different for each landowner and for different areas of forestland. A professional MA licensed forester can help assess your forest and make suggestions as to how you can increase its resilience. Some generally accepted ideas for increasing resilience are as follows:

Increase diversity of tree species. Since some species may be more susceptible to stressors, such as drought, the greater the variety of species present in a forest, the more resilient a forest will be to change. For example, pests often target one tree species, and if your forest comprises only a few tree species then one pest could have a major impact. Diversity can be increased through actions such as planting trees (known as underplanting, or enrichment planting) or through forest management designed to promote vigor and regeneration of tree species best adapted to future conditions. Planting or promoting at least some trees that are more adapted to the conditions predicted for the future will help ensure a continued healthy forest.

Control invasive species. Invasive plants can impede forest regeneration and displace native plant communities, degrading the ecological value of forestland and decreasing biodiversity. Increased disturbances brought on by climate change can exacerbate existing invasive species problems, so controlling small populations now can limit their negative effects in the future.

Increase structural diversity. Forests with different size and age classes can be more resilient to stressors such as storms and droughts because young trees are already established to fill space created by trees that may succumb to these stressors. Active forest management can help create the structural heterogeneity that can lead to a more resilient forest stand.

Mitigate deer browse pressure to ensure regeneration. Protecting new saplings from deer, especially if planting saplings proactively, can help ensure successful establishment of trees that are adapted to the site.

These are just a few ideas about how you can take action to increase the resiliency of your forestland. We recommend speaking with your consulting forester about how climate change might affect your forest, or contact your DCR Service Forester with questions.



As part of Service Forestry's new climate forestry initiative, there is now the option to create a climate smart Forest Stewardship Plan, and there is new climate smart forestry information available (see links below). To assist with the cost of creating a climate smart Forest Stewardship Plan, Service Forestry has added climate forestry as an additional feature of their cost-share program, initially only for select towns ([Forest Stewardship Forms](#)).

As with any activity on CR-protected land, be sure to check your CR language to ensure any specific management activities are permitted. Please reach out to us if you have any questions.

For more information on forest resiliency, please visit :

DCR Service Forestry: [Climate Forestry](#)

UMassAmherst: [Forest Resiliency](#)

MassAudubon: [Climate-Smart Forestry Resources](#)

Nature Corner

Bees

When someone mentions bees, chances are the honeybee comes to mind. What many people don't know is that the honeybee is actually from Europe and was imported for its honey and beeswax, and there are in fact about 4,000 (!) species of other bees that are native to North America. The native bees pollinate 80% of the flowering plants and 75% of the fruits, nuts and vegetables grown in the U.S., and ensuring the health of bee populations is critical to ensuring the continuation of native flowering plants and food production. Some of the native bees are generalist pollinators, while others have evolved to pollinate specific plant groups. Most native bees nest either in holes in the ground or in hollow stems or holes made by themselves or other wood-boring insects in dead wood. Here we feature a couple of bee species native to the northeast and discuss the types of habitat management that can benefit native bee populations.

Clark's Mining Bee is one of the first solitary bees seen in spring and can often be found foraging on willow catkins which are one of the first blooms in spring. The female collects pollen exclusively from willows, but will collect nectar from other plant groups. She excavates holes in the ground, and constructs multiple chambers in each burrow and adds a pollen pod to each chamber. She will then lay eggs on the pollen pods and the larvae feed on the pollen and emerge the following year.



Clark's Mining Bee by David McCorquodale

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Funding Opportunities for Landowners

MassWildlife Habitat Management Grants

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.



Wood Turtle by Patrick Randall

This program is only open to owners of protected land (including land with CRs) in Massachusetts. Funding is provided to conduct habitat management to:

Manage habitat for Species of Greatest Conservation Need, with special emphasis on State-Endangered and State-Threatened Species; improve habitat for game species (those species that can be legally hunted, fished, or trapped in MA); and expand recreational opportunities.

Applicants can receive \$10,000-\$50,000 per grant. This is an annual reimbursement program and there is no grantee match requirement.

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 CR Stewardship Staff, to make sure that your CR allows the land management practices you have in mind. More information about the grant can be found here: [MassWildlife Habitat Management Grant Program](#)

Bees Cont. from Page 3..



Golden Northern Bumblebee

The Golden Northern Bumblebee is long-tongued and can reach nectar and pollen from longer flowers. It nests in loose tangles of grass mixed with goose or other animal droppings likely carried in by the bee. The queen bees makes honey for her bee larvae to eat. A few of the flower species visited by this bee are Joe-pye Weed, Common Milkweed and Black Willow.

Native bees have been declining, but there are many actions a landowner can take to increase or improve habitat for bees to combat this decline.

- ◇ Increase the diversity and abundance of native flowering plants (foraging)
- ◇ For farm fields, leave the weedy/grassy edges (nesting and foraging)
- ◇ Minimize pesticide use as much as possible

- ◇ Leave snags and downed woody material unless posing a hazard (nesting)
- ◇ Delay mowing of old fields or mow only a portion each year (foraging and nesting)
- ◇ Maintain or plant trees and shrubs with pithy or hollow stems such as elderberry or sumac (nesting)
- ◇ Maintain early successional habitat with open areas in forests
- ◇ Maintain areas of bare soil where appropriate

As with any activity on CR-protected land, be sure to check your CR language to ensure any specific management activities are permitted.

To learn more about bees and how to manage habitat for bees visit:

Xerces Society: [Pollinator Conservation Resources: Northeast](#)

USDA Forest Service: [Bee Basics](#)



Bumblebee and Joe Pye Weed—by Danielle Brigida



Be on the lookout for the invasive **Spotted Lanternfly** which poses a danger to crops and native plants. First detected in PA in 2014, it has recently been discovered in Fitchburg, MA (Sep. 2021) and in Shrewsbury (Jan. 2022). For more information and a form to report any sightings please visit: [Spotted Lanternfly](#)

Photo by Luke Hearon

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