



Department of Conservation and Recreation

Summer 2024

Conservation Connections

DCR Land Protection Program News

Greetings!

We hope you are enjoying some beautiful nature-filled summer days. For some summer reading and contemplation, we wanted to share a new opportunity for climate smart forestry funding (see page 2), some information on cultural resource management on CR properties (see page 3) and some “fresh” ideas about ash tree preservation (see below and page 4). Please let us know if you have any questions!

In the last newsletter, we highlighted the acquisition of the ~2,000-acre Lynn Woods CR, and since then, we acquired four additional CRs. The four new CRs protect 241 acres of diverse natural lands in Warwick, Ashburnham and Lincoln. The new Lincoln CR in particular, protects an important parcel adjacent to the very popular Walden Pond Visitor Center, enhancing the conservation of this important historical area. Several of the CRs were acquired in partnership with non-profit organizations (Mass Audubon, Ashburnham Conservation Trust, and the Walden Woods Project).

See you in the woods sometime soon!
CR Stewardship Program Staff

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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Nature Corner

Preservation of Ash Trees

Ash trees are an important component of forests in MA and are valued for their ecological function, cultural significance, economic value, and beauty. Three native ash tree species exist in MA; white ash which is a common upland and important timber species, green ash which typically inhabits wetlands and floodplain habitats, and the less common black ash which inhabits wetland areas with mineral-rich groundwater.

All three provide food and habitat for many wildlife species. Black ash, also called brown ash, has special cultural significance and has been used for basket making for thousands of years by Indigenous peoples. ...Cont. Pg. 4



Funding Opportunities

Climate Stewardship Incentive Program (C-SIP)



Are you interested in managing your forest in a climate-friendly way? The Climate Stewardship Incentive Program (C-SIP) is a new component of DCR Service Forestry's cost-share program intended to assist forest landowners with the costs of addressing impacts from climate change on forests, forest carbon, and the rural economy. It provides financial encouragement for landowners to carry out approved stewardship practices focused on soil protection, carbon retention, and increased forest adaptive capacity.

C-SIP applications are completed by the private licensed forester responsible for preparing your forest stewardship and cutting plans. The program provides landowners with reimbursement of costs for select forest management and timber harvest practices that help achieve the goals of the [Forests as Climate Solutions Initiative](#).

There are five specific practices eligible for reimbursement under this program. These include C-SIP 1 - Harvest Layout Design (proper design of skid roads and landing areas); C-SIP 2 - Legacy Tree Retention (strategic retention of old and very large trees); C-SIP 3 - Tree Marking before harvesting activities (selective marking intended to increase forest adaptive capacity and structural diversity); C-SIP 4 - Invasive Plant Species Control (mechanical and/or chemical treatments); and C-SIP 5 - Use of Best Management Practices during timber harvests (erosion control measures). In association with their consulting forester, landowners can apply for reimbursement of costs for any of these practices that would benefit their land and achieve the climate-oriented goals.

The following are considered eligible applicants for the C-SIP cost-share Program:

- Any individual, municipality, for-profit entity, Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), or Not-For-Profit (NFP) organization (qualified for tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Federal Internal Revenue Code) that owns forest land.
- Landowners with an approved Forest Stewardship Climate Plan for C-SIP 2 and C-SIP 3.
- Landowners with an approved or submitted Long-Term Forest Cutting Plan for C-SIP 1, C-SIP 4, and C-SIP-5.

For more information about C-SIP and additional details on eligibility, see the [Climate Stewardship Incentive Program website](#), or speak to a licensed forester.

Cultural Resources on Your CR Land: A Guide

Did you know people have been inhabiting these lands and waters we call Massachusetts for at least 12,500 years? Chances are your lands and waters contain evidence of past human occupation and land use. We call these non-renewable creations “cultural resources.” These resources can include a broad range of potentially overlapping evidence of past people’s relations to their lived places and spaces. Such evidence can include ancient indigenous home sites with evidence of stone tool creation and maintenance, to early modern industrial sites that may include mass-produced byproducts of the global economy.

To learn more about indigenous people in Massachusetts visit:

[MA Historical Commission: Archaeology Resources](#)

[MA Commission on Indian Affairs](#)

[North American Indian Center of Boston](#)

[MA Center for Native American Awareness](#)

Do you know how to care for and manage the known and expected cultural resources that are present above and below the surface of your CR property? When thinking about management activities or construction on your CR property, consider that any ground disturbance, even minor, can permanently disrupt the stories recorded in the ground. Legally, cultural resources are managed and protected by various laws and regulations at the municipal, state, and federal level. [DCR’s Office of Cultural Resources](#) (OCR) provides technical assistance in archaeology and historic preservation to DCR staff and can do the same for you. DCR OCR assists in maintaining a library of [Best Management Practices](#) (BMPS), including BMPS for cultural resources such as archaeological sites, cemeteries, and historical landscapes. If you are interested in learning more about cultural resources and their identification, preservation, and protection within your CR property, [DCR OCR staff](#) are available to answer your questions.

DCR Archaeologist conducting archaeological investigation. Photo by Jonathan Patton



CR Approvals and Cultural Resources:

DCR’s Conservation Restrictions protect many types of conservation values, including both natural resources and cultural resources. Many DCR CRs have specific provisions to protect known and expected cultural resources on the property and permit archaeological surveys with appropriate oversight. In addition, any request for approval that

DCR CR stewardship staff receive is evaluated for its potential effects on cultural resources. First, DCR staff evaluate whether the proposed project could have a potential impact on cultural resources – for example, a project that includes new construction, grading, earth movement or filling may have the potential to impact surface and subsurface cultural resources. If DCR CR staff ascertain that the project has any potential to impact cultural resources then we are required to obtain Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) review of the project. Generally, in order to obtain that review, DCR requires that the landowner file a Project Notification Form (PNF) along with the request for approval they submit to DCR. DCR’s OCR staff can help landowners design a project that is less likely to adversely affect cultural resources and craft a PNF that reflects that improved project design. Once MHC receives a complete PNF, they have 30 days to comment on it. MHC can determine whether the project will have an “effect” and/or provide technical recommendations to avoid, minimize or mitigate adverse effects to significant historic and archaeological resources. Visit this [MHC website](#) for more information about MHC.



Remains of a 19th century Coke Kiln
Photo by Jonathan Patton

Ash preservation cont...

All of our ash species grow in nutrient-rich environments that generally have high botanical diversity and are often associates of rare plants or indicators of uncommon natural communities.

The future of ash trees in North America is threatened by the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), an exotic beetle whose larvae feed on the inner bark of ash trees which has caused the death of hundreds of millions of ash trees across North America. First detected in 2002 in the US and Canada and likely originally introduced in Michigan, EAB has spread across eastern North America. Within MA, it was first discovered in 2012 in Dalton but is now present throughout the state. Many land managers have been removing ash trees from the landscape to salvage economic value and the utility of ash lumber before it's lost, as well as intending to slow the spread of EAB.

Recent convincing evidence indicates that some ash trees are resistant to EAB, which offers hope that ash trees may not suffer the same plight as the American Chestnut. These findings present an opportunity for some land managers to take a more conservative approach to ash management and work towards preserving and enhancing ash tree populations on their land. With numerous land managers preserving ash trees throughout their range, the chances of any resistance getting passed on to the next generations will increase. Also, should an effective biological control be found eventually or occur through natural processes, efforts to preserve genetic diversity will benefit future ash generations and our forests and wildlife.

Forest management strategies to promote regeneration of and to preserve existing ash trees can be found in this [Managing Northeastern Forests Threatened by Emerald Ash Borer booklet](#). Strategies include different types of silvicultural techniques, controlling invasive plants, addressing deer herbivory, retaining a diversity of ash tree ages and both genders, and creating “preservation patches.” Working with a forester to incorporate some or all of these strategies into the management of your forests could help ensure that these valuable and beautiful trees are not erased from the landscape. Also, for people interested in a citizen science project to conserve ash species, please visit www.monitoringash.org.

And as always, please check your CR language to make sure any planned activities are permitted and reach out to us with any questions!



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