

FORESTS AS CLIMATE SOLUTIONS

DCR Stewardship Council

10/11/24

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Agenda

Introduction

- Goals
- Timeline

Status Update

- Implementation Components
- Highlights of State Response to Climate Forestry Committee & Workplan

Questions & Discussion

THE POWER TO FIGHT CLIMATE CHANGE

Forests are a powerful tool in fighting climate change.
Let's unleash the power of Massachusetts forests; Together.

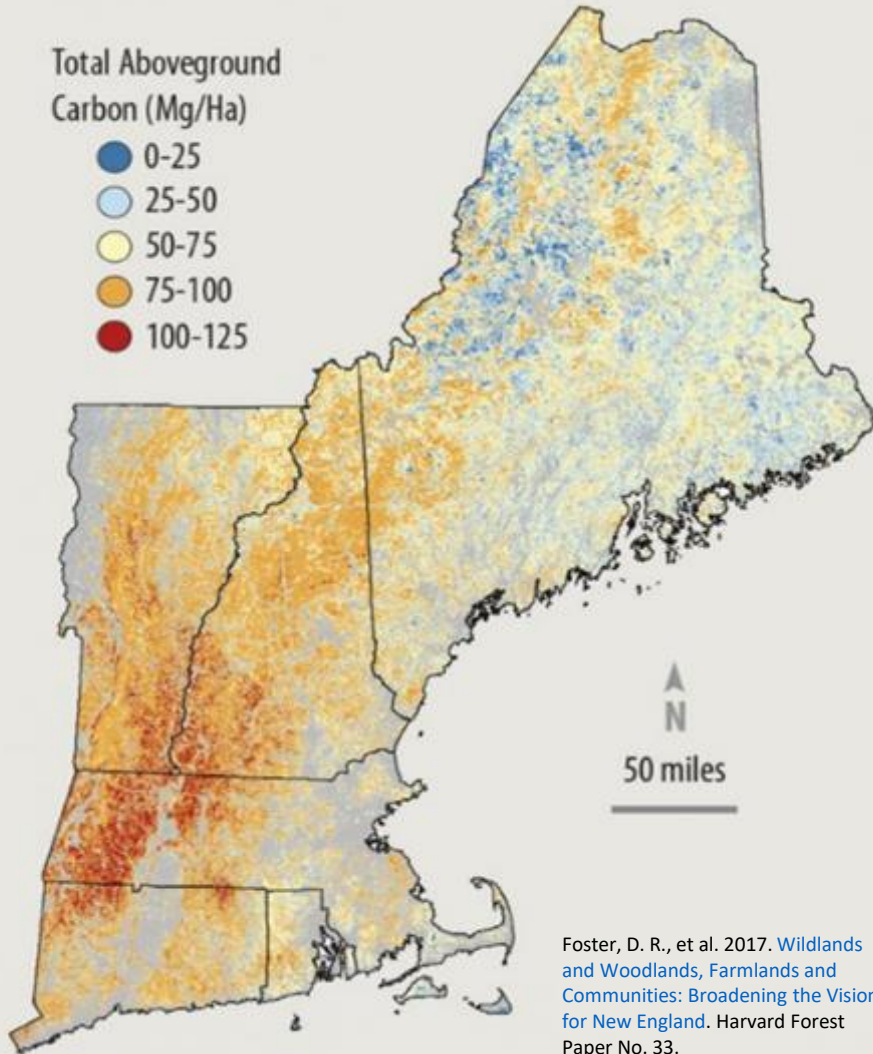
Our Forests

Massachusetts: 5,175,349 acres
Forested Land: 2,984,347 acres or 57%

Private Land: 1,911,815 acres
Public Land: 1,072,532 acres
 State Lands: 525,377 acres
 DCR State Parks
 DCR Water Supply Protection
 DFW Fisheries & Wildlife

About 1,450 acres or <1% of state forests
are harvested per year

About 150,000 acres are currently
designated as reserves



FOCUS AREAS & GOALS

GUIDE

Develop climate-oriented forest management guidelines for state land managers

Convene and receive guidance from the Climate Forestry Advisory Committee (CFC)

CONSERVE

Reduce forest land conversion

Increase the rate of permanent conservation for forested land

Align on state continuum approach to passive/active management

INCENTIVIZE

Partner with and sustain forest landowners to keep their forests as forests

Encourage climate-oriented management choices

Bring innovation to the forestry industry

MEASURE

Understand the latest science & best practices and apply it to our practices and decision-making

Increase transparency of forest management practices by collecting and sharing forest data

How We Got Here

June 2023

Launched Forests as Climate Solutions.

Summer – Fall 2023

Convened Climate Forestry Committee (CFC) of experts and held public process.

January 2024

CFC released recommendations. EEA announced \$50M in investments.

June 2024

State issued response to recommendations and launched implementation plan.

TEAMS focused on the branch initiatives throughout the process to accomplish the Forests as Climate Solutions goals and objectives.

Senior Leadership from EEA, the state Forestry Divisions, and the Climate Chief's office provided feedback to the CFC.

State Forestry operations work to align recommendations with daily forestry practices across DCR and DFW.

INITIATIVES UNDERWAY



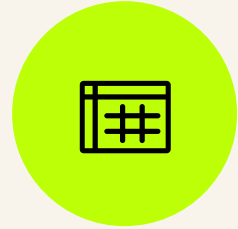
Landowner incentives and forest business assistance

1. Climate Stewardship Incentive Program (C-SIP) provides incentives for 5 practices
2. Cost share program for licensed harvesters



Forest reserves and land conservation expansion

1. Resilient Lands Initiative
2. Clean Energy & Climate Plan actions



Forest and carbon data & transparency

1. Planning for public forest data dashboard
2. Expansion of state forest monitoring network

WHERE WE'RE GOING

If phase 1 was about scoping the work, phase 2 is about making changes, sustaining progress and meeting our goals.



300,000

Our goal is to manage 300,000 acres of protected public and private forest as reserves and conserve 40% of the land in MA by 2050
— and this requires us to conserve land at 2x our current pace.

OUR MANAGEMENT CONTINUUM

Managing annually along the continuum



1%

1% Actively Managed: Intervening deliberately to create specific conditions.

99%

99% Passively Managed: Deliberate choice to let natural processes occur.

FORESTS AS CLIMATE SOLUTIONS IS ABOUT DOING MORE

MORE services, programs,
and technical assistance to
forest landowners.

MORE intentional conservation of land,
while still addressing statewide
housing challenges.

MORE capacity to store and
sequester carbon through long
term forest protection measures.

MORE safety and security
for our biodiversity.

MORE production, promotion,
and prioritization of Massachusetts
wood, instead of importing.

A photograph of a forest stream with a small waterfall cascading over rocks, surrounded by dense evergreen trees. The scene is dimly lit, with the water providing a bright focal point. The text 'THE POWER OF DATA' is overlaid in large, bold, yellow-green letters.

THE POWER OF DATA

Collecting and analyzing forest status data allows us to make informed decisions about long term landscape level goals and objectives and many other management choices.

Where We Are Going...

Biodiversity and Early Successional Habitat

Assess goals and review alternatives to cutting maturing forests to create habitat

Soils

Allow more forests to mature through passive management

Implement the Healthy Soils Action Plan

Data and Online Dashboard

Create a new online dashboard – land cover, forest types, carbon storage, disturbances

Monitoring

Develop long-term monitoring program to measure forest conditions and climate impacts to guide management decisions

Expand Continuous Forest Inventory Plots across state lands

Acquire Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) data from the US Forest Service

Updated Climate-Oriented Practices

Implement CFC recommendation to incorporate three climate-oriented forestry practices in planning activities

Best Management Practices

Develop a new BMP Manual through DCR's Service Forestry Program

Include updated content for soil protection and other climate-oriented practices

Invasive Plants, Pests & Pathogens

Develop cross-agency policy to protect forest health from increasing invasive threats

Expand Forest Reserve Science Advisory Committee and evaluate charge given intentions for reserve land

Where We Are Going...

Expansion of Reserves

10% of forest lands – of all ownership -- statewide

- New acquisition of state lands
- Seeking/funding private, non-profit, municipal and federal landowners to dedicate reserves

Ecological Disturbances/Salvage Harvesting

Limit circumstances for salvage harvesting (removal of dead, damaged, or diseased trees to recover value prior to deterioration)

Further explore calculation of when carbon gain outweighs loss

Integrate Evolving Science into Management Approaches

Expand breadth of expertise and scope of Forest Reserves Committee to advise all three divisions

Engage with scientific experts to guide appropriate management of reserves

Private Forest Lands

Continue to explore expansion of incentives through the Working Forest Initiative including Climate Stewardship Incentive Programs

Analyze private lands harvesting data to inform recommendations for management incentives

Landscape Scale Planning

Develop land management goals for state lands that optimize carbon sequestration and storage and attain climate and other goals

OUR FOCUS AREAS



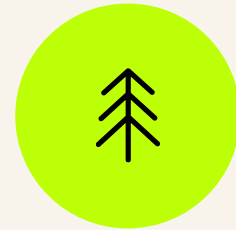
Data Collection

Develop a comprehensive monitoring strategy to capture data on forestry practices and forest health.



Data Dissemination

Launch and sustain an online dashboard to share relevant key forest and climate metrics across Massachusetts.



Reserves Expansion

Assess the current landscape and strategize how to expand reserves on public and private land.

Upcoming Efforts

Update forestry pages on Mass.gov to provide common landing page.

Implement Climate Considerations Narrative Table into all state forestry practices.

Ensure land management objectives are clearly articulated at both the program and project level.

Implement Executive Order 618 “Biodiversity Conservation”.

Identify land to be managed as reserves within DWSP and DFW owned forests.

Update key planning documents to reflect CFC guidance including Landscape Designation, Watershed Land Management Plan, Forest Action Plan, State Wildlife Action Plan, Forest Resource Management Plans...

Update BMP manual with expanded climate oriented best practices.

Address updates to Chapter 132 and the associated regulations.

Determine means to codify reserves.

Add forest cutting plan inspection reports to website.

Upcoming Efforts

Expand the membership and charge of the Forest Reserve Science Advisory Committee (FRSAC).

Craft and adopt an updated salvage policy to be utilized by all state forestry divisions.

Provide forest cutting plans and post-project feedback for state forestry projects on Mass.gov.

Secure vendor to research, assess, and recommend invasive species approach and decision tree.

Improve transparency of forestry projects by updating Mass.gov to include information about full continuum of forest management activities.

Expand information in new project proposals using the accepted guidance from the CFC recommendations.

Compile background information and market analysis for potential ecosystem service and carbon credit program such as Chapter 61C.

ON THE HORIZON

Scientifically study the outcomes of forest management across the continuum

Specify metrics and compile data to guide the establishment of a resilient future state for our forests.

Develop state-wide goals and strategies to achieve that desired future state.

Funding Overview

Nearly **\$50M** in funding is programmed to support Forests as Climate Solutions implementation:

About half was directly budgeted, from a one-time ARPA allocation

\$11.5 M tied directly to FCS Branches:

- \$8 M for acquisition of forest reserves
- \$3 M for incentives for market development and business and private landowner incentives

Remainder for targeted expansion of existing forest conservation grant programs:

- Community Investment grants, including LAND, Municipal Drinking Water Protection
- EEA and Agency land acquisition spending
- Conservation Partnership and Landscape Partnerships grants
- Tree planting, urban greening, land use planning, technical assistance

About half of this attributed funding comes from annual spending in service of conservation and protection of forests statewide

WE NEED EVERYONE UNDER THIS CANOPY.

The climate crisis
knows **NO** boundaries,
so neither can our vision
for our forests.



WHEN IT COMES TO KEEPING OUR FORESTS AS FORESTS, WE NEED YOU.

Let's work with **each other**. Let's learn from **each other**. Let's assess **our needs**.

Let's balance **our strategies**. Let's harness **the power of the collective**.

Let's make **better decisions**. Let's solve **the one problem we all share**.

Let's leverage our **forests as a climate solution**.

THANK YOU