



Forest Conservation Due Diligence Grant Program

The lack of funding for due diligence costs can be a barrier for landowners interested in conserving their woodlands. The Forest Conservation Due Diligence Grant Program provides financial assistance to qualified forest landowners who permanently protect their land, and who donate land or conservation restriction (CR) value. This Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (MA DCR) Program covers the costs of appraisals, title exams, surveys, closing costs, and environmental site assessments.¹

To be eligible for the Due Diligence Grant Program, landowners must:

- 1) Own subject land in specific Massachusetts municipalities designated by the New England Governors' Conference "Keeping Forests as Forests" report. These areas include the Massachusetts sections of the Taconics Partnership, Massachusetts-Vermont Woodland Partnership, Southern New England Heritage Forest Partnership, and Quabbin to Cardigan Partnership.²
- 2) Attend a qualified *MA DCR Working Forest Initiative* event or a qualified *US Forest Service New England Governors' Conference Commission on Land Conservation Pilot Region* event.
- 3) Conserve at least 10 acres of forested land. In addition, MA DCR must determine that the land contains significant natural resource value.
- 4) Donate all or part of the appraised value of the land or conservation restriction. The appraised value must be determined by a Qualified Independent Appraiser. The donation must be worth at least 50% of the conservation project's appraised value or at least \$100,000. Projects where 50% of appraised value is greater than \$100,000 are only required to donate \$100,000 of value to qualify.
 - For example, a project with a CR value of \$350,000 would qualify if at least \$100,000 is donated – which is less than 50% of its appraised value.
 - In another example, a project with a CR value of \$150,000 would qualify if \$75,000 of the value is donated, which is 50% of the appraised value.
- 5) Be enrolled in the Forest Stewardship Program or Chapter 61 (or Chapter 61A or Chapter 61B if the requirements of Chapter 61 are met). Landowners pursuing a CR who are not enrolled may apply for a Due Diligence Grant and enroll in the Forest Stewardship Program concurrently.
- 6) The Due Diligence Grant may not exceed 50% of the donated value of the land or CR.
 - For example, a land donation of \$10,000 is eligible for a grant worth no more than \$5,000.

The program reimburses landowners for approved due diligence costs only after the project has been approved by MA DCR for eligibility and the project has been recorded at the Registry of Deeds.

The MA DCR Forest Conservation Due Diligence Grant Program is administered by Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust. **For more information**, contact Jay Rasku at 978-248-2118 or rasku@mountgrace.org. For information about other landowner incentive programs in the MA DCR Working Forest Initiative, go to www.masswoods.net.



¹Costs for these due diligence expenses are capped. Contact Mount Grace for more information.

²A maximum of not more than two landowners per year may be eligible from the Quabbin to Cardigan region.

Eligible Municipalities

ADAMS	HANCOCK	PHILLIPSTON
ALFORD	HARDWICK	PITTSFIELD
ASHBURNHAM	HAWLEY	PLAINFIELD
ASHFIELD	HEATH	RICHMOND
ATHOL	HOLLAND	ROWE
BARRE	HUBBARDSTON	ROYALSTON
BELCHERTOWN	LANESBOROUGH	SAVOY
BERNARDSTON	LEICESTER	SHEFFIELD
BRIMFIELD	LEVERETT	SHELBURNE
BROOKFIELD	LEYDEN	SHUTESBURY
BUCKLAND	LUDLOW	SOUTHBRIDGE
CHARLEMONT	MONROE	SPENCER
CHARLTON	MONSON	STURBRIDGE
COLRAIN	MONTAGUE	SUTTON
CONWAY	MOUNT WASHINGTON	TEMPLETON
DEERFIELD	NEW ASHFORD	WALES
DOUGLAS	NEW BRAINTREE	WARE
DUDLEY	NEW SALEM	WARREN
EAST BROOKFIELD	NORTH ADAMS	WARWICK
EGREMONT	NORTH BROOKFIELD	WEBSTER
ERVING	NORTHFIELD	WENDELL
FLORIDA	OAKHAM	WEST BROOKFIELD
GARDNER	ORANGE	WEST STOCKBRIDGE
GRANBY	OXFORD	WESTMINSTER
GREAT BARRINGTON	PALMER	WILBRAHAM
GREENFIELD	PELHAM	WILLIAMSTOWN
HAMPDEN	PETERSHAM	WINCHENDON