

The Forest Climate Resilience Program

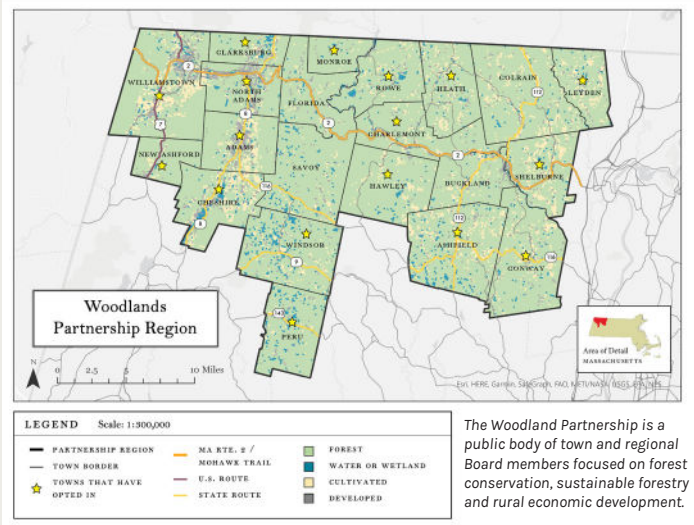


The Forest Climate Resilience Program (FCRP) assists municipalities in planning and implementing practices that help forests cope with climate extremes (adaptation) while also locking away greenhouse gases that cause climate change (mitigation). Forests are important to our communities and municipalities often want to take steps to increase the resilience of their forests. This program provides technical assistance to municipalities within the Woodlands Partnership of Northwest Massachusetts Region (with expansions to other municipalities and private land coming soon) and allows them to apply for funding to cover the cost of implementing climate-informed forest resiliency practices on town-owned forestland.

Forests and Climate Change

Forests are struggling to adapt to climate change due to the rate at which it's occurring and the impacts of past land-use decisions, development, invasive species, and deer herbivory. To ensure our communities' forests are healthy and stewarded for future generations, we need to protect, restore, and sustainably manage forests across the Commonwealth. The five management practices that FCRP helps communities implement are designed to improve a forest's ability to respond to climate change—making sure forests continue to provide benefits for wildlife and people including scenic landscapes, habitat, carbon storage, clean water and air, recreation, and jobs.

Participating municipal properties serve as demonstration sites that help local private landowners better understand the benefits of climate-smart forestry. Interested landowners can then receive a free Forest Stewardship Climate Plan from the Department of Conservation and Recreation to help them implement similar practices on their own land.



Program Phases

1. Municipalities work with a forester to develop a Forest Stewardship Climate Plan. This assures that management actions are well-informed and designed to promote adaptation and mitigation while also incorporating community input.
2. Municipalities can receive grant funding and technical assistance to implement climate-smart practices.

Learn More

If you're a municipal official or would like to find out more about managing your own forest, reach out to Mass Audubon at climateforestry@massaudubon.org or via phone at 413-252-9534.



Climate-Smart Practices

Management actions that promote climate adaptation and mitigation are sometimes referred to as climate-smart forestry. The FCRP has identified five climate-smart forestry strategies that will promote both forest adaptation and mitigation. Tactics that fall within one of these five practices may be eligible for funding. Practice manuals are available for each practice.



Plant Trees to Increase Forest Stocking

Some forested areas may be stressed and are not adequately growing or “stocked.” This practice involves planting tree species that can cope with climate change and requires that stressors, like deer browse and invasive plants, be addressed.



Enhance Adaptive Capacity in Northern Hardwood and Spruce-Fir Forests

Past land-use and threats to forest health often limit a forest’s ability to cope with the intensifying impacts of climate change. Climate-smart harvest practices can promote climate-adapted trees and overall forest diversity building what’s known as forest resilience (adaptive capacity).



Protect Seedlings and Saplings from Deer Browse

Forests with high deer populations often lack healthy young trees. Measures like temporary tree tubes and fencing can protect young trees, allowing the forest to better respond to climate change in the long-term.



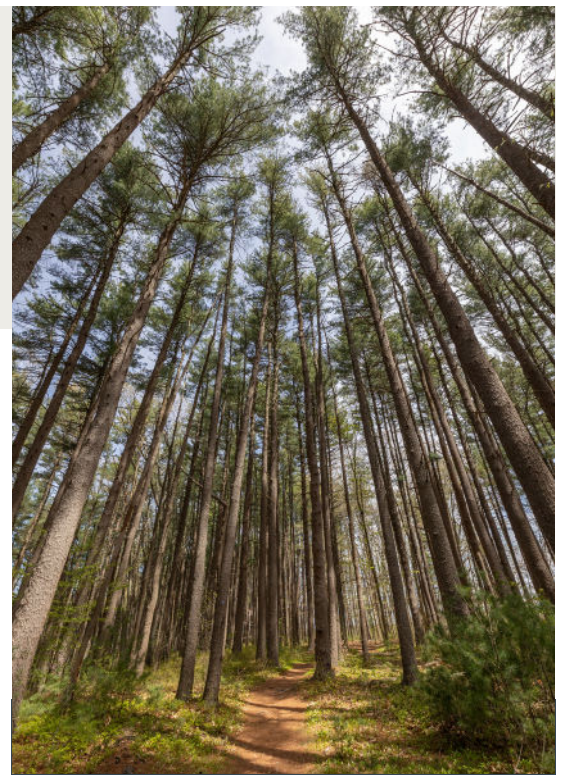
Climate-Informed Forest Access and Forestry Operations

Harvests, including those for wildlife habitat and forest resilience, often use heavy machinery and can have negative impacts on soil and water. Forestry best management practices are already used to reduce those impacts. However, climate change is causing more extreme storms and shortened winters, creating the need for additional protections such as the use of additional water bars and bridge mats that protect soil and water quality.



Remove Invasive Vegetation

Invasive species can prevent young trees from becoming established and can impact water quality. They can also threaten the success of other management efforts. Treating invasive species where they are preventing new generations of trees from growing can help ensure the success of other forest management actions and can build resilience to climate change.



Additional Resources

Find out more about Climate-Smart Forestry Initiatives:

massaudubon.org/climateforestry

Find out more about MTWP:

mohawktrailwoodlandpartnership.org

Get a Forest Stewardship Climate Plan:

mass.gov/guides/climate-forestry



Program Partnership coordinated
by Mass Audubon

