

# State Specific Training Module for Massachusetts

Updated May 2023

# Purpose of this Module

This module will provide general information that TSPs need to conduct conservation planning in Massachusetts. This information is general in nature so the TSP may need to follow up with additional reading or training to make sure they have the knowledge, skill, licenses and certifications to conduct conservation planning in this state.

# Major Land Uses

- Massachusetts covers approximately 5 Million acres;
- The Commonwealth is roughly 45% forested and 5% cropland/pasture;  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the cropland acres are managed as hay/pasture.
- There are 7,200 farms; average farm size (cropland + woodlands) is 68 acres.
- Top 5 crops are: 1) Greenhouse/nursery; 2) Cranberries; 3) Dairy; 4) Apples; and 5) Aquaculture.
- \$100 Million in direct sales to consumers in 2017.

# Review of State Laws

- All NRCS engineering conservation practice designs must be stamped by a licensed Massachusetts Professional Engineer.

# Review of State Laws

## Nutrient Management

Massachusetts currently has no state requirement for the development of nutrient management plans; applications of nutrients **have** state guidelines.

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/330-cmr-31-plant-nutrient-application-requirements-for-agricultural-land-and-non-agricultural/download>

# Review of State Laws

- Forestry—MGL Chapter 132—MA Forest Cutting Practices Act
- MA Forest Cutting Practices Act requires a cutting plan be filed for harvests of 25,000 board feet or 50 cords of wood.
- All Cutting Plans must be signed by a state licensed Forester or a licensed Timber Harvester.
- Ch. 132 harvests address the Ch. 131 MA Wetlands Protection Act through the Forest Cutting Practice Act.
- More information can be found on the Massachusetts Department Of Conservation and Recreation web site.
- <https://www.mass.gov/guides/forest-cutting-practices-act>

# Review of State Laws

## Massachusetts Wetland Protection Act

Massachusetts protects wetlands and other wetland resource areas within the Commonwealth. The local Conservation Commission administers the regulations at the local level for the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. Individual cities and towns may have additional regulations associated with wetland protection.

<https://www.mass.gov/regulations/310-CMR-1000-wetlands-protection-act-regulations>

# Review of State FOTG Requirements

## Vegetative Practices

- Planting guidelines should be followed for all seedings (Cover Crop, Pasture and Hayland Planting, Conservation Cover, Field Border, Riparian Herbaceous/Forested Buffers, or Critical Area Plantings).
- Mowing of vegetation should consider the needs of ground nesting birds. Birds in Massachusetts nest from April 15 to August 1.



# Important Wildlife Resource Concern Issues

Two current species of concern for Massachusetts NRCS are the Bog Turtle and the New England Cottontail. Contact the NRCS State Resource Conservationist or the MA Division of Fisheries and Wildlife's Natural Heritage Program for additional information on planning considerations for these species.

Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP)  
<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/masswildlifes-natural-heritage-endangered-species-program>

# Northern Long-eared Bat

Due to Federally listed bat species; time of year cutting restrictions are in place. Review by NRCS, Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, and they US Fish and Wildlife Service are required for all projects with tree cutting activities.

All forested areas are subject to cutting restrictions (outside June 1 – July 31).

Some specific sites have wider restrictions (April 15 – October 31) depending upon known presence of bat.

# Expected TSP Workflow

- The State Resource Conservationist (SRC) will be responsible for reviewing TSP conservation planning for the National Planner Certification.
- Subsequent conservation plans will be reviewed by the District Conservationist (DC) at the local USDA Service Center.
- The SRC will conduct plan reviews for TSP planner certification renewals. The SRC will also Spot Check a percentage of the plans every year.
- TSPs will work with the local District Conservationist to make sure the proper environmental evaluations (NRCS-CPA-52) are completed.

# Additional References or Training

- Massachusetts NRCS Website  
[www.ma.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.ma.nrcs.usda.gov)
- University of Massachusetts Soil Testing Laboratory  
<http://www.umass.edu/soiltest>
- Conservation Webinars Portal Site  
<https://conservationwebinars.net/>
- UMass Extension Agriculture Teams  
<http://ag.umass.edu/quick-guide-to-extension-agriculture-and-commercial-horticulture-resources>

## Certificate of Completion

After viewing the State Specific Training module, please print and sign the completion certificate on the following slide.

The certificate is your acknowledgement that based on the information provided in this module, you have the proper knowledge, skills and ability to conduct planning in this State.

Within your NRCS Registry profile, enter the training and upload the signed certificate to verify completion.

# STATE SPECIFIC TRAINING MODULE COMPLETION CERTIFICATE

I, \_\_\_\_\_ hereby verify I have viewed and understand the content of the *Massachusetts State*  
*TSP Name*  
Specific Training Module and affirm I have the knowledge, skills, and ability to conduct conservation planning  
services in this state.

\_\_\_\_\_  
TSP Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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