



Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

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Patrick Administration Protected 22,353 Acres of Land in FY 2009

New grants to protect additional 813 acres kick off conservation efforts for 2010

BOSTON — In keeping with Governor Patrick's unprecedented commitment to preserve open spaces and improve public parks across the state, the Commonwealth permanently protected 22,353 acres of land – the equivalent of 61 acres per day – during fiscal year 2009, and today awarded additional grants totaling \$4 million to preserve another 800 acres, Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Ian Bowles announced.

During the first two and half years of Governor Patrick's administration, the Commonwealth protected nearly 54,000 acres of land – with 24,104 acres protected during fiscal year 2008.

"Open spaces – from our urban parks to our rural farms – are some of the Commonwealth's most precious assets," said Governor Patrick. "We are making great progress toward preserving those assets for generations to come."

"By conserving land across the Commonwealth, we're saving our landscapes for recreation and agriculture, and ensuring water quality for our children's children," said Secretary Bowles, whose office released its FY 2009 Land Protection Report today. "These efforts showcase the successful partnership across agencies, community organizations, land trusts and private citizens who worked to protect thousands of acres from Wareham to Whately."

FY 2010 Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity (LAND) grants will fund projects in **Amherst, Brewster, Groton, Groveland, Harwich, Millbury, Monson, North Andover, North Hampton, Petersham, Plymouth, and Taunton**. [Click here for a link to a statewide map of grant recipients](#).

2009 LAND PROTECTION REPORT

In FY 2009, EEA supported 217 conservation projects that protected 22,353 acres through a combination of grants, fee purchases, and conservation and agricultural preservation restrictions. State-funded land conservation programs leverage significant additional investments. In FY 2009, the Commonwealth's investment of \$57.7 million was matched by \$21 million from private landowners, nonprofit organizations, municipalities, and other sources.

EEA-administered programs were responsible for protection of 1,738 acres in 67 communities. EEA agencies also made significant strides in conserving open space. The Department of Fish and Game (DFG) protected 8,277 acres of fish and wildlife habitat in 43 communities. The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) added 6,331 acres to the state forest system in 31 communities, and the Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR) protected 3,553 acres in 40 municipalities. The Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) protected 372 acres to safeguard drinking water supplies in six communities.

Also during 2009, 3,029 acres were preserved at no cost to the state through 147 conservation restrictions – a voluntary, legally binding agreement between a landowner and a public agency or private land trust – approved by Secretary Bowles. An additional 680 acres were preserved via legislation and other means.

Beginning in 2011, a conservation tax credit recently passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor will provide a greater incentive for landowners to donate EEA-qualified conservation land to the state, municipalities or nonprofit conservation organizations. Capped at \$2 million a year overall, the state income tax credit is valued at 50 percent of the appraised fair market value of the land up to \$50,000 per gift, not to exceed the donor's annual state income tax liability, though it may be carried forward for 10 consecutive years.

Land program expenditures in FY 2009 included \$48.8 million in bond funding, \$913,625 in fees generated from hunting licenses, \$3.7 million from ratepayer funds generated by the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority for water quality protection, and \$4.2 million in federal funding.

Project highlights include:

- A collaboration among land trust and conservation organizations, the town of Plymouth, and the AD Makepeace Company – a cranberry grower and the largest private landholder in Eastern Massachusetts – to protect thousands of acres in Carver, Plymouth and Wareham;
- The creation of 17 new urban parks, including five acres of park land along the Nashua River in Fitchburg;
- Protection of 1,927 acres of agricultural land on 33 farms, including 45 acres on the Harvest Farm in Whately;
- Securing vital habitats with the protection of 4,053 acres in 10 targeted habitat reserves, including a DCR partnership with the Massachusetts Audubon Society to conserve 133 acres on Upper Spectacle Pond in Otis;
- A new 56-acre park in Dighton that features walking trails and views of the Taunton River;
- 173 acres of land to protect the city of Fitchburg's water supply.

Full details of these statewide conservation achievements are available in the [2009 Land Protection Report](#).

[Click here to see photos of landscapes protected in FY 2009.](#)

NEW LAND GRANTS AWARDED

The Patrick Administration today awarded new grants totaling \$4 million to help 12 Massachusetts municipalities purchase 813 acres to protect recreational land, drinking water aquifers, wetlands, and wildlife habitat. Matched by \$4.2 million in municipal, private and nonprofit funding, these FY 2010 Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity (LAND) grants will fund projects in **Amherst, Brewster, Groton, Groveland, Harwich, Millbury, Monson, North Andover, North Hampton, Petersham, Plymouth, and Taunton.**

Since 1961, EEA's LAND (formerly known as Self-Help) grants have helped cities and towns acquire land for conservation and outdoor recreational uses such as hiking, wildlife watching, fishing, hunting, and cross-country skiing. Funding for the FY 2010 LAND grants comes from the \$1.7 billion Energy and Environment Bond Bill signed by Governor Patrick in August 2008.

"Protecting and preserving rare species and is important to our environmental efforts in Plymouth and across the Commonwealth," said Senate President Therese Murray. "This grant will help the work being done in Plymouth to conserve our open space and protect natural habitats unique to our area."

To qualify for the reimbursement grants, communities must fund the projects upfront. Municipalities may use grant funds for outright land purchases or partial interests, such as conservation restrictions, and for

surveys and fees associated with the transactions. The grants reimburse municipal conservation commissions between 52 percent and 70 percent of project costs up to \$500,000.

"I am thrilled that these wonderful sites in Monson and Petersham are being preserved for future generations," stated Senator Stephen Brewer. "I would encourage all residents to visit and explore the conservation lands in and around these areas."

"I am extremely pleased that Taunton will be receiving a land grant for the Three Mile River project. The state has reiterated the importance of this project by awarding a grant at the maximum amount allowable. The city will be able to use the funding to preserve a precious area of land for future generations," said Senator Marc Pacheco.

"It's good to see these kinds of investments being made in western Mass.," said State Senator Stan Rosenberg. "These projects will help protect two of the great jewels in our area."

"I am pleased to see the administration make such determined efforts at conserving land around the Commonwealth," said Senator O'Leary. "The application by the towns represents a local commitment to preserving their natural resources for generations to come and I applaud their efforts."

"I am very pleased that this funding has been made available for Kiwanis Beach and Brierly Pond," said Senator Michael O. Moore. "This project will help secure the future and vitality of a notable recreation and wildlife area for the town. As a Millbury resident, I am proud to see that this effort will go forward."

"I am very excited for the residents of Monson and for all that are able to use this site," said Rep. Brian Ashe. "We are fortunate enough to be able to secure the grant that will protect and maintain this beautiful area for now and the immediate future. In these difficult economic times this is a small investment that will bring back many wonderful returns."

"I am extremely pleased this grant will enable Taunton to preserve signature open space and land in the Westville neighborhood for future generations," said Representative James Fagan.

"State assistance for conservation commissions to provide better stewardship of our environmental resources is essential, especially in a down economy. These land grants will enable good land acquisitions to go forward, protecting land which might otherwise have gone unprotected," said Representative Ellen Story.

"It is heartening to know that the people of Brewster continue to value open space and to preserve that aspect of our natural heritage and that the commonwealth continue to support local efforts to preserve such areas," said Rep. Cleon Turner. "I am proud to assist in those efforts."

The following communities have been selected to receive LAND grant funding during fiscal year 2010:

Amherst – Station Road Wildlife Corridor: \$371,000

- 21 acres
- Project will preserve wetland, wet meadow and open field on one of the last parcels of unprotected open space in the Station Road Wildlife Corridor. The property will protect endangered rare species habitat, the Lawrence Swamp aquifer, and wetland feeders to Hop Brook. The property is within 50 feet of the Robert Frost Trail, Norwottuck Rail Trail, and other local trails.
- [Click here to download JPG maps of the grant recipient.](#)

Brewster – Bates at Punkhorn Parklands: \$500,000

- 36 acres
- This project will add to the 1,000-plus acres of land conserved by the town of Brewster and neighboring Harwich. This is one of the largest blocks of unfragmented forest on Cape Cod, providing important breeding ground for migrant neotropical songbirds. The property falls within

the drinking water supply zone for the towns of Brewster, Harwich, and Dennis. Three “ancient ways” will be preserved as part of Old Cape Cod, which provides residents and visitors the opportunity for hiking, biking, horseback riding, and other outdoor recreation.

- [Click here to download JPG maps of the grant recipient.](#)

Groton – Martins Pond Brook Conservation Area II: \$93,600

- 7 acres
- The project adds 15 acres to the Martins Pond Conservation Area, preserving a whole marsh ecosystem for wildlife habitat including a threatened species breeding population. The property will be open for walking and passive recreation.
- [Click here to download JPG maps of the grant recipient.](#)

Groveland – Town Forest Greenway: \$500,000

- 62 acres
- The project will more than double the size of the town forest, to over 100 acres. The project will link the greenway to other protected open space including the Division of Fish and Wildlife’s (MassWildlife) Crane Pond Wildlife Management Area.
- [Click here to download JPG maps of the grant recipient.](#)

Harwich – Sutphin property at Island Pond Conservation Lands: \$192,556

- 3 acres
- This property is ecologically sensitive, mature pine-oak woodland abutting 78 acres of protected open space owned by the town and the Harwich Conservation Trust. The property is habitat for rare species. The parcel is adjacent to the Cape Cod Lavender Farm and in close proximity to the Cape Cod Rail Trail.
- [Click here to download JPG maps of the grant recipient.](#)

Millbury – Mount Ararat: \$158,400

- 15 acres
- This parcel will link town-owned Kiwanis Beach to Briery Pond, an area already popular with bikers, hikers, and skiers. The project will also protect historic Old Common Road.
- [Click here to download JPG maps of the grant recipient.](#)

Monson – Flynt Quarry Lands: \$258,400

- 165 acres
- This forested property includes wetlands, a large vernal pool, and rocky outcrops overlooking the town center. The property is the site of a former 19th-century granite quarry and is already a popular site for public use. Existing trails link three public schools, a golf course, and other town lands. Once protected, the land may be included in the town's Cultural and Historical Corridor trail network.
- [Click here to download JPG maps of the grant recipient.](#)

North Andover – Windrush Farm Conservation Project: \$500,000

- 160 acres
- The farm, which borders Boxford, is part of nearly 1,800 acres of contiguous forest. The parcel is 120 acres of white pine-red oak upland forest and 40 acres of wooded wetland, and includes wildlife habitat. Existing trails serve Windrush Farm Therapeutic Equitation programs and the public.
- [Click here to download JPG maps of the grant recipient.](#)

North Hampton – Beaver Brook: \$365,475

- 100 acres

- This project will preserve a brook and wetlands complex, upland red oak and white pine forest and wildlife habitat and remove two dilapidated buildings. This parcel contains two important areas for Northampton's water supply, and the Beaver Brook and Broad Brook watersheds.
- [Click here to download JPG maps of the grant recipient.](#)

Petersham – St. Mary and St. Scholastica Church: \$256,000

- 155 acres
- In cooperation with the East Quabbin Land Trust and Harvard Forest, this project utilizes a conservation restriction to protect a large forested parcel owned by Benedictine St. Scholastica Priory and St. Mary's Monastery. The property is a key connection between town-owned Gould Woodlot, Petersham State Forest and Harvard Forest, which would form a block of more than 2,500 acres of protected land. The property includes rare species habitat and is close to the ecologically rich Tom Swamp.
- [Click here to download JPG maps of the grant recipient.](#)

Plymouth – Herries Acquisition, Eel River Connector: \$269,700

- 36 acres
- This parcel is a critical rare species habitat and includes white pine and oak forest with an understory of huckleberry and blueberry. The property is located above the Plymouth sole source aquifer and abuts the 129-acre Eel River Preserve.
- [Click here to download JPG maps of the grant recipient.](#)

Taunton – Three Mile River Project: \$500,000

- 54 acres
- This parcel includes seven habitat types, 32 acres of open meadow and fields, and ¾-mile frontage on the Three Mile River. The property includes rare species habitat and contains a Native American archaeological site. The property has been actively farmed for more than 100 years. The project will allow farming to continue in areas not sensitive to wildlife.
- [Click here to download JPG maps of the grant recipient.](#)

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