

Conserving New England's Forests and Forest-Based Economy

Community ~ Economy ~ Conservation

End of year FY 2014 Funding Recommendations from the New England Forest Policy Group

As the most forested region in the country, New England's economy is strongly dependent on the health and integrity of its forests. Communities across the region depend on our wooded landscapes for their health and well-being, as do the 60 million people within a day's drive. Businesses in the timber, forest-products, recreation, outdoor equipment, and tourism industries depend directly on long-term access and use of the region's forests.

The continuing budget crisis and any further budget cuts will have tremendous impact on the future of these forests and our regional economy, buffeted already from recent cuts to pivotal forestry and conservation programs. Forest loss in New England is escalating. If funding to conserve our irreplaceable natural resources continues to decline, the economic, ecologic, and cultural consequences will be felt across the region--for generations to come.

Today we ask the New England Delegation to take every effort to support the critical programs that sustain our forested landscape and their associated benefits for our region, its communities, and its future. The new budget agreement creates some needed flexibility in the Appropriations process and we strongly urge the delegation to do all it can to protect funding for the programs supporting our region's forest-based economy. Stopping across-the-board sequester cuts should be a particular priority for the delegation. Funding LWCF at the senate-recommended level of \$400 million is a must, and a stepping stone to full \$900 million authorized funding.

Forest Legacy funding for managed forest conservation easements, Community Forest funding, National Blueways funding for the Connecticut River, landowner assistance programs, and the other programs listed on page three are also of critical importance.

In the following pages is a breakdown of recent funding for our most critical conservation programs and the anticipated levels if a continuing resolution (CR) with automatic Sequester Reductions were to go forward. We have also included the funding levels we requested in testimony to the House & Senate Interior Appropriations Committees on what the conservation and forestry communities, and in most cases the President's budget and administration, actually think we *need*. Although we understand those numbers are not currently on the table for consideration, it helps puts the actual budget deliberations in perspective.

The New England Forest Policy Group is an informal collaborative of diverse forestry businesses and conservation organizations united by our efforts to conserve and sustainably manage the forested landscapes that characterize our region. New England's forests are the backbone of our forest products and recreation economies, and provide services of incalculable value including clean air, clean water, biodiversity protection, climate mitigation, and flood resilience. They are 85% privately owned and increasingly vulnerable to development and permanent loss. Conservation cannot wait for another day.

Thank you for your support of New England's forested heritage and economic future. The stakes could not be higher. We look forward to working closely with you to ensure that our iconic forested landscape and associated economy and culture continue to receive bipartisan support and funding.

Programs of key importance

Interior Appropriations

- Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and affiliated Programs – (including federal programs, state grants, Community Forest Program, Forest Legacy, etc.) – Conserves land for National Forests, Seashores, Parks, Refuges, etc. LWCF allows every state to conserve and improve recreation assets based upon their own prioritization. Forest Legacy helps private landowners retain ownership of forestlands through easements. The Community Forest Program supports community purchase of forestlands for local ownership and use. The federal Blueways Program will be critically important for conservation and recreational access in the very-popular Connecticut River National Blueway.
- Cooperative Forestry Programs – (UCF, CFHM, FSP) Cooperative Forestry Programs funds landowner services provided by State Foresters and Cooperative Extension Foresters. These programs include: providing technical services to forest landowners, providing educational services in urban areas and communities, developing forest stewardship plans, providing training for natural resource professionals, increasing public awareness of forest resources in rural and urban areas, providing training for the public in the Coverts programs, and supporting the implementation of forest stewardship plans. These services support private landowners and all who benefit from sustainable and healthy management of forests in the region and of trees and urban forests in our communities.
- Other Interior Programs – (NAWCA, SWG, CWEP) NAWCA funds conservation of important wetland parcels. SWG funds State Wildlife agencies to support their efforts conserving non-game species and funds states' Wildlife Action Plans to help prioritize conservation activities. The Community Wood Energy Program, created for New England in the last federal Farm Bill, has yet to be funded. It will support a growing movement to replace New England's dependence on heating oil with wood from sustainably managed, local forests that can create 140,000 jobs, reinvest \$4.5 billion in the regional economy, and displace 1.14 billion gallons of imported fossil fuel each year.

Agriculture Appropriations

- Land-owner support programs through NRCS (WHIP, FRPP, DSP, WRP, EQIP) – NRCS' natural resources conservation programs help people reduce soil erosion, enhance water supplies, improve water quality, increase wildlife habitat, and reduce damages caused by floods and other natural disasters. This helps landowners throughout New England improve their working lands for the future while protecting our shared natural resources.
- Rural Development Programs (RBEG, RBOG, BIGLP) – The USDA Rural Development programs support rural communities and enhances quality of life for rural residents by improving economic opportunities, community infrastructure, environmental health, and the sustainability of agricultural production. To support rural regional economic prosperity, USDA Rural Development provides job training and business development opportunities for rural residents, including cooperative business development, community economic development and strategic community planning.

Commerce Appropriations

- Coastal Conservation and Regional Development – (CELCP, NBRC) The CELCP Program supports coastal conservation across the nation. The demand for funding far exceeds the available funding. At an anticipated FY14/Sequester appropriations level, this program is nearly irrelevant, with applications for projects from all coastal & Great Lakes states in the nation. It is essential for New England that funding is greatly increased. The NBRC was created in the last Farm Bill for the Northern Border states of ME, NH, VT, and NY. It supports community development, infrastructure, recreation, and conservation projects in these states.



Programs of Critical Importance to New England FY11 – FY14 (w/ Sequester)

| Interior Programs | FY10 Enacted | FY11 Enacted | FY12 Enacted | FY13 Enacted (Sequester) | FY14 Sequester Est. | FY14 NEFPG Requests |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| LWCF | 453 | 301 | 322.9 | 306.3 | 290.985 | 600 |
| * Forest Legacy Program | 79 | 52.9 | 53.4 | 50.6 | 48.07 | *84.8 |
| * Federal Program | 277.9 | 176.9 | 199.5 | 189.2 | 179.74 | *338 |
| * State Grants Program | 40 | 40 | 45 | 42.7 | 40.565 | *60 |
| Community Forests | | 1 | 2 | 1.91 | 1.81 | 4 |
| Cooperative Watersheds (Blueways) | | | | 0 | 0 | 3.3 |
| NAWCA | | 37.4 | 35.6 | 33.8 | 32.11 | 39.4 |
| SWG | 90 | 61.9 | 61.4 | 58.2 | 55.29 | 61.4 |
| RTCA | 8.872 | 8.872 | 9.943 | 9.575* | 9.096 | 10 |
| UCF | | 32.04 | 31.33 | 29.94 | 28.443 | 31 |
| CFHM | | 48.82 | 40 | 38.23 | 36.32 | 48 |
| FSP | | 32.55 | 28.81 | 27.54 | 26.16 | 29 |
| CWEP | | | | | | 5 |
| Agriculture Programs | FY10 Enacted | FY11 Enacted | FY12 Enacted | FY13 Enacted | FY14 Sequester Est. | FY14 Request |
| WHIP | 85 | 85 | 50 | 68.8 | 65.36 | 70 |
| FRPP | 150 | 175 | 150 | 189.8 | 180.31 | 200 |
| | No acreage Limitation | | | | 984.96 | |
| CSP | | 649 | 768.5 | 1036.8 | | 1057 |
| WRP | 308 | 300 | 290 | 275.5* | 261.73* | 268 |
| EQIP | 1180 | 1238 | 1400 | 1318.8 | 1252.86 | 1350 |
| RBEG | 38.7 | 38.7 | 24.3 | 22.4 | 21.28 | 24.318 |
| RBOG | 2.63 | 2.47 | 2.37 | 2.193 | 2.08 | 2.25 |
| BIGLP | 1322 | 1045 | 822 | 821 | 779.9 | 958.097 |
| Commerce Programs | FY10 Enacted | FY11 Enacted | FY12 Enacted | FY13 Enacted | FY14 Sequester Est. | FY14 Request |
| CELCP | | 11 | 3 | 2.8 | 2.66 | 20 |
| NBRC | 1.5 | 1.5 | 1.49 | 1.41 | 1.35 | 5 |

As you work with your colleagues to finalize FY 14 Appropriations levels, we strongly urge you to do all you can to work towards our shared goals of full funding for the LWCF Program and substantial funding levels for Cooperative Forestry, Rural Development, and Landowner Support programs that are critical to the forest-based and rural economies so important for New England. Given the large discrepancy between the early House and Senate Appropriations bills, it is vital that the Senate levels for LWCF and many other of our critical programs be reached in the final bills.

After five years of funding reductions, the efficacy of our most vital federal programs has been greatly reduced. With the flexibility that was created in the joint House-Senate Budget Agreement, we hope very much that you will do all you can to ensure ample funding for the programs that provide the most benefit to New England's important forestry, tourism, and outdoor recreation sectors. With respect to LWCF, investing at the FY14 Senate level of \$400 million will ensure that in addition to the pivotally important Forest Legacy Projects, significant state and local park recreational needs will be met across our New England states. It will also be a very important step towards our shared goal of full funding for the LWCF Program.

**The organizations listed below endorse and urge action on the
priorities described in this set of FY 2014 New England Forest Policy
Recommendations**

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| Appalachian Mountain Club | Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions |
| Appalachian Trail Conservancy | Monadnock Conservancy |
| Aspetuck Land Trust | Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust |
| Audubon Connecticut | Natural Resources Council of Maine |
| Audubon Society of New Hampshire | New England Forestry Foundation |
| Audubon Vermont | New Hampshire Land Trust Coalition |
| Bear-Paw Regional Greenways | Northeast Wilderness Trust |
| Connecticut River Watershed Council | Northern Forest Canoe Trail |
| Deep River Land Trust | Northern Forest Center |
| East Haddam (CT) Land Trust | Northland Forest Products, Inc. |
| Essex County Greenbelt Association | Prosperity for Rhode Island |
| Forestland Group, LLC | Quabbin to Cardigan (Q2C) Partnership |
| Friends of Acadia National Park | Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust |
| Friends of Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge | Rensselaer Plateau Alliance |
| Friends of Silvio O. Conte National Wildlife Refuge | Ridgfield (CT) Conservation Commission |
| Harris Center for Conservation Education | Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests |
| Highstead Foundation | The Conservation Fund |
| Littleton Conservation Trust (MA) | The Nature Conservancy |
| Loon Echo Land Trust (ME) | Town of Redding Conservation Commission |
| Lower CT River Valley Council of Governments | Trust for Public Land |
| Lyme Timber Company LP | Trustees of Reservations |
| Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust | Vermont Land Trust |
| Maine Audubon | Vermont Natural Resources Council |
| Mass Audubon | Vermont Woodlands Association |
| Mass Land Trust Coalition | |