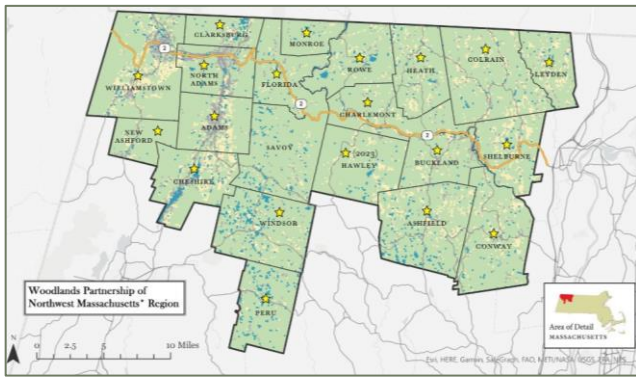


Woodlands

PARTNERSHIP



The Woodlands Partnership of Northwest Massachusetts (established as the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership in 2018 state law) is a public body with its board comprised of representatives from the 21-town region (Franklin County: **Ashfield, Buckland, Charlemont, Colrain, Conway, Florida, Hawley, Heath, Leyden, Monroe, Rowe, Shelburne**; Berkshire County: **Adams, Cheshire, Clarksburg, New Ashford, North Adams, Peru, Savoy*, Williamstown, Windsor**) as well as from Berkshire Natural Resources Council, Berkshire Regional

Planning Commission, Deerfield River Watershed Association, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Franklin County Community Development Corporation, Franklin Land Trust, Franklin Regional Council of Governments, Hoosic River Watershed Association, Lever, Inc., Massachusetts Society of American Foresters, Massachusetts Forest Alliance, Ohketeau Cultural Center, University of Massachusetts Amherst, and the U.S. Forest Service. New England Forestry Foundation serves as Administrative Agent for the Partnership.

Active & Ongoing

- Ten-Year Plan (2023-2033) continues to guide Board action.
- WoodlandsPartnership.org – our new website – launched in June.
- TheForestCenter.org also debuted in June – The Forest Center of Northwest Massachusetts (sponsored by the Woodlands Partnership of Northwest Massachusetts and the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program) is a resource provided by the Forest Climate Resilience Program, a multi-partner initiative hosted by Mass Audubon. This website provides community members as well as state and municipal staff with information on the region's forests, threats to their healthy functioning, and options for land stewardship.
- The Woodlands Partnership has been awarded \$75,000 through the MA Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs to contract with the UMass Boston Collins Center for Public Management to study the effects of tourism and state Payment-In-Lieu-of-Taxes (PILOT) shortfalls/inequities on municipal safety services within the region and provide recommendations.
- Planning and implementation of climate-smart forestry practices on properties with Forest Stewardship Climate Plans is underway with cost-share funds and application development. Practices include thinning, riparian buffer planting, invasive species treatment, under-planting, forest regeneration patches, and forest improvement of degraded stands or timber stand improvement.
- "Go Big" Forest Legacy application submitted – local regional land trusts work on pursuing conservation projects following the Partnership's successful admittance into the eligibility area.

2024

- \$550,000 awarded in grant funding to ten rural communities and six regional conservation and economic development organizations (details on the back!)
- Colrain voted to join—welcome!
- Governor Healey signs Partnership name change legislation into law—thank you to Sen. Mark and Rep. Blais!
- U.S. Forest Service formally recognizes the name change to the Woodlands Partnership of Northwest Massachusetts
- The Woodlands Partnership Board votes to pursue National Heritage Area Designation and complete the necessary feasibility study
- The Woodlands Partnership is named a Regional Conservation Partner (RCP) joining a network of over 50 RCPs and over 600 organizations and agencies
- Workshops on Estate planning and land conservation held – at Franklin Land Trust and Williamstown Rural Lands
- Woods walks held in Hawley, North Adams, Rowe, and Savoy
- Trees planted in Charlemont for riparian restoration
- Inaugural Indigenous-led book club reading *Becoming Kin: An Indigenous Call to Unforgetting the Past and Reimagining Our Future* by Patty Krawec
- Ethan Tapper book reading hosted in Shelburne Falls – *How to Love a Forest: The Bittersweet Work of Tending a Changing World*

*As of January 2025, Savoy has not yet voted to join the Partnership.

Town(s) or Regional Organization	FY 2024 Project	Project Description	Funding
Rowe & Heath	Highlands Regional Trail – Route and Landowner Agreements	Creates a regional trail extending from Shelburne across these two towns to the Mohawk Trail State Forest.	\$50,000
Berkshire's Tomorrow Inc.	Berkshires Outside Website (Phase II)	Supports improvements to www.berkshiresoutside.org , a county-wide, comprehensive website of information about outdoor recreation assets in the region. This grant will facilitate improvements, as well as outreach and promotion.	\$75,000
Berkshire Environmental Action Team (BEAT)	Forest, Trees, Ecology and Climate Educational Project	Educates locals and visitors about forests, trees, and ecology through the creation of educational handouts, and hosting tree walks. An estate planning workshop will be hosted to encourage landowners to consider land conservation in their plans.	\$13,164
Windsor	Road Maintenance for a Climate Resilient State Forest (Invasives Reduction)	Implements invasive species inventory and management recommendations for 15 miles of gravel roads through Windsor State Forest maintained by the Town.	\$25,000
Charlemont	Recreational Infrastructure Project and River Access parking	Installation of portable toilets at the Shun Pike rest area to provide facilities for visitors and enhanced parking facilities in town to improve weekend river access and use.	\$25,000
Williamstown	Town Green Plantings for Resilience and Diversity	Completes the planting of the Town Green with a diversity of species to replace ash trees lost to the Emerald Ash Borer.	\$25,000
Shelburne	Improve and expand trail access in Shelburne	Establishes the trailhead for a hiking trail along the Deerfield River that will connect to the Mahican Mohawk Trail.	\$9,000
Franklin Land Trust	Lands for Hope	Installation of signage to promote public access, as well as to educate visitors about management practices at three Franklin Land Trust properties located within the Partnership Region.	\$49,532
Connecticut River Conservancy	Deerfield River Wild and Scenic Study and Stewardship Plan	Completes a Wild and Scenic River Feasibility Study and Stewardship Plan for the Deerfield River.	\$75,000
Heath	Wayfinding Kiosks	Creates new wayfinding infrastructure to direct the public to trailheads and other public recreation opportunities.	\$25,000
Rowe	Pelham Lake Park – Implementing Climate Smart Forest Plan	Continues to implement one of the first climate smart forestry plans in the Commonwealth with data collection to assess the success towards meeting long-term goals and educational signage.	\$12,840
Greenagers	Youth based jobs program	Develops a youth-based job program designed to address trail safety, accessibility, and sustainability in the City of North Adams, the town of Savoy, and the town of Williamstown with youth, ages 14-24, recruited and hired from local high schools and colleges.	\$18,057
New England Forestry Foundation	A study of the Effects of Tourism on Municipal Services in the Woodlands Partnership Region	Evaluates municipal services in the Partnership region to identify opportunities to improve services to meet increasing tourism, use and accessibility of public forests in the region, and ensure that municipal services can keep pace.	\$75,000
Peru	Purchase of an UTV	Purchase of a Utility Terrain Vehicle (UTV) for search and rescue purposes and wildlands fire prevention.	\$25,000
Leyden	Purchase of an UTV	Purchase of a Utility Terrain Vehicle (UTV) for search and rescue purposes and wildlands fire prevention.	\$25,000
Adams	Greylock Glen Forest Center (shade structure)	Funds the design and installation of a cantilevered shade structure for outdoor events and educational programs.	\$25,000

The Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs (EEA) offers yearly grants to communities that have voted to participate in the Partnership and to regional organizations that work in the Partnership Region to advance the goals of the Woodlands Partnership. To learn more visit woodlandspartnership.org/implementation-grants