

## Using Forest Legacy to Enlarge the Puzzle

## Connecting Protected Forests With Conservation Easements

**The Challenge**

Often times in many states existing conservation lands were protected as the land became available. This frequently results in large areas of protected forests that are separated from other protected forest by development. The strategy in recent years for many areas is to figure out how to connect these existing large protected forests like puzzle pieces to prevent scattered isolated forestland that reduces the viability of wildlife habitat, timber operations, and scenic value.

**The Solution**

A 467-acre property in Petersham Massachusetts that has been in the family since the 1880's, contains unique wildlife habitats, managed forests and with nearly a mile and a half of road frontage, this tract was ideal for development, but lies between three large already protected forests. The landowners wanted to keep this legacy of the past a legacy for the future. On March 30, 2003 a conservation easement on the 2-Mile Landbridge property was transferred to the State of Massachusetts valued at \$600,000 using \$330,000 in Forest Legacy funds.

**Resulting Benefits**

- The 2-Mile Landbridge property abuts the Commonwealth of Massachusetts State Forest and Harvard forest to the west and a State Wildlife Management Area to the east providing a protected corridor of nearly two miles.
- 7,000 feet of road frontage along 3 different roads will be kept natural providing scenic opportunities along these roads.
- The protected block of forests that are now connected total over 24,000 acres.
- The property will continue providing wildlife habitat and forest products as the property will continue to be managed according to a state approved forest management plan.



The 2-Mile Landbridge Forest Legacy project is a key piece in the puzzle that results in a protected forest area of over 24,000 acres that are contiguous.

**Highlights of Massachusetts's Forest Legacy Program**

- Seventeen properties totalling 2,999 acres have been protected from conversion to nonforest uses with conservation easements valued at \$12,177,000, using \$5,146,000 in Forest Legacy funds.
- Funding for 8 additional properties amounting to over 2,200 acres has been allocated by the Forest Legacy Program.
- An additional 9 projects totaling 2,670 acres of land have been proposed by the Massachusetts State Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee for future funding.

**Sharing Success**

- The success of Forest Legacy projects in Massachusetts has resulted in a wellspring of interest in the Forest Legacy Program, resulting in an expanded Forest Legacy Program.

*The Forest Service's Forest Legacy Program helps protect private forest lands from development and keep those lands in productive forestry use.*



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