



## 2011-2012 MUNICIPAL CONSERVATION LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

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Mass Audubon works to protect the nature of Massachusetts for people and wildlife. Together with more than 100,000 members, we care for 34,000 acres of conservation land, provide educational programs for 225,000 children and adults annually, and advocate for sound environmental policies at local, state, and federal levels. Mass Audubon's mission and actions have expanded since our beginning in 1896 when our founders set out to stop the slaughter of birds for use on women's fashions. Today we are the largest conservation organization in New England. Our statewide network of wildlife sanctuaries, in 90 Massachusetts communities, welcomes visitors of all ages and serves as the base for our work.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has a long history of granting authority to local communities to manage their own affairs. In home-rule Massachusetts, the responsibility for land use planning and most of the authority to regulate development rests with 351 individual municipalities. As a result, Mass Audubon's municipal legislative advocacy is focused on encouraging municipalities to take advantage of available policy tools and statewide enabling acts to conserve natural resources of local significance.

Mass Audubon is a founding member of the Green Neighborhoods Alliance, an association of planners, environmentalists, state and municipal officials, lawyers, developers and real estate agents; a founder of the 8-member Steering Committee of the Community Preservation Coalition, a collaboration of open space, affordable housing, and preservation organizations; and, an integral partner of the Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions, which supports the 351 municipal conservation commissions across the Commonwealth.

### Stewardship through Community Partnerships

- *Community Preservation Act*: Enables any municipality to establish a local dedicated fund for open space acquisition, historic preservation, and affordable housing. For more information, visit [www.communitypreservation.org](http://www.communitypreservation.org).
- *Shaping the Future*: Empowers citizens to get involved with community planning, land protection, and project review as well as respond to climate change. For more information, visit <http://www.massaudubon.org/advocacy/>.
- *Open Space Residential Design*: Offers an alternative method of planning residential development that is designed to conserve open space in a new subdivision, through a four step planning process that reverses typical subdivision review procedures. For more information, visit [www.greenneighborhoods.org](http://www.greenneighborhoods.org).
- *Non-Zoning Wetlands By-Law/Ordinance*: Enables a municipality to protect additional resource areas, for additional values, with additional standards and procedures stricter than those of the state Wetlands Protection Act (G.L. Ch. 131 §40) and regulations (310 CMR 10.00). For more information, visit [www.maccweb.org](http://www.maccweb.org).