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### PRESS RELEASE

# Healey-Driscoll Administration Announces Grants to Support Rural Economies and Forest Conservation

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Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

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**BOSTON** — The Healey-Driscoll Administration today awarded \$460,000 in grant funding to increase economic development focusing on the conservation and sustainable management of forests within Massachusetts' Woodlands Partnership of Western Massachusetts region. Through the Woodlands Partnership Grants, the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) is supporting nine rural communities and three regional conservation and economic development organizations in improving access to outdoor recreation in town and state forests, improving the safety of outdoor recreation, and implementing climate-smart forestry practices.

“We’re investing in Massachusetts’ rural communities to unlock the full potential of our forests – from tourism, to recreation, to robust economic development,” **said EEA Secretary Rebecca Tepper.** “The Woodland Partnership Grants support the conservation of one of our most spectacular regions while also helping local economies in a sustainable way.”

The program follows the passage of 2018 law that officially launched the regional partnership to improve rural economic development based through sustainable forest conservation, tourism, and support for the fiscal stability of these communities – the most rural and forested in Massachusetts. The Woodlands Partnership is a grassroots-led program developed after dozens of local meetings. The resulting program is based on conserving forests and supporting their sustainable management to improve the economy along the Vermont and New York border. The projects include educating residents and visitors about the important role of forests in reducing the impacts of climate change on communities across Massachusetts. Projects receiving a Woodlands Partnership Grant are:

Town(s) or Regional Organization	Project	Project Description	Funding
Rowe & Heath	Highlands Regional Trail – Route and Landowner Agreements	Creates a regional trail to link Shelburne across these two towns to the Mohawk Trail State Forest.	\$50,000

Windsor	Climate Smart Road Maintenance (invasives reduction)	Completes an invasive species inventory and report for 15 miles of gravel roads through Windsor State Forest maintained by the Town and purchases a special mowing attachment to implement the plan.	\$24,984
Charlemont	River Rafting Rescue Equipment	Purchases land and water rescue equipment for town first responders to safeguard the thousands of rafting visitors.	\$19,152
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
New Ashford	Creation of a Trailhead Parking and Picnic Area	Funds the purchase of land and the development of a parking and picnic area to give residents and visitors access to the Mt. Greylock Reservation.	\$22,400
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission	Greylock Glen Forest Center Exhibit (forest and climate exhibit)	Funds the design and installation of an exhibit in the new Forest Center to highlight the role of forests in stabilizing the impacts of climate change.	\$75,000
Lever, Inc.	Launching the Woodcraft Collaborative to support local wood businesses	Supports business development and marketing for dozens of small businesses that utilize local wood to produce a variety of products.	\$75,000
Buckland	Riverside Woodland Walk and Native Plant Demonstration	Creates a riverside trail leading from the village and plants a diversity of pollinator and food-producing native species in partnership with local regenerative nurseries.	\$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 treatment of ash trees and a trailhead exhibit.	\$23,485
New England Forestry Foundation	Implementing Climate Smart Forestry	Complements a \$540,000 federal grant to conduct outreach and support to private and town forest managers to implement a range of climate smart forestry practices with federal funds.	\$75,000
Peru	Pierce Scenic Way -gaining access to forests for tourism	Completes the restoration of this scenic gravel road to give access to a large state-owned parcel. As with many of the grants, the Town will provide significant match when implementing of the project.	\$20,000
Adams	Greylock Glen Forest Center (local wood, buildings and climate exhibit)	Funds the design and installation of a climate exhibit about the benefits of using local wood in large buildings such as the Forest Center.	\$25,000
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$460,021</b>

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## Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

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