

# Forest Practices Advisory Board

July 2, 2025

Members Present: Chris Martin, Joan Nichols, Brennan Sheahan, Dr. Mark Ashton, Ian Branson, Joan Nichols

Absent: Barbara Kelly, Bruce Spaman

Guests: Sheila Hoefle (DEEP Forestry), Alison Rau (DEEP Legal), Nick Zito (DEEP Forestry), CTN, Mike Ferrucci

2025 Legislative Session Update - Chris shared the information found beginning on page 3.

DEEP Forestry hopes to recommend a CT Certified Forester for membership on the working group associated with Special Act 25-12.

USDA FS Skidder Bridge Grant Update – The program’s purpose is to protect water resources and reduce water quality degradation during forestry-related operations requiring temporary water crossings. Funding has been granted to establish a temporary bridge rental program for portable skidder bridges, 16 timber bridges, and one pair of steel bridges. The program continues to be on hold due to the current administration’s review of federal funding.

A Wood Innovations Grant application was submitted in December of 2024. This program also continues to be on hold due to the current administration’s review of federal funding.

BMP Smart Phone App Update –NIC CT has created a BMP app for CT. The app is downloadable for Apple devices, Android is on hold pending updates from Google. MDC loggers tested the app and were impressed with the capabilities and accuracy. DEEP Forestry hosted 2 webinars introducing the app to certified forest practitioners, 33 total participants.

Forest Practices Notification Form Update – CACWIC plans to review the draft form. DEEP and the CT Farm Bureau are supportive of the form. The adoption of an official form will provide consistency for Permitted as of Right Activity pursuant to the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Act.

FPAB Vacancies – There are several vacancies on the Board; one member from an Environmental Organization not primarily concerned with forests, a member of the general public and a member from an environmental organization that is concerned primarily with forests. It is anticipated that a representative from the CLCC will fill the vacancy for a member from an organization that is not primarily concerned with forests and that CFPA will fill the vacancy for an environmental organization that is concerned primarily with forests.

CEU Regulation Change Discussion – Nick shared draft regulations with board members (see page 8). Joan expressed thanks to DEEP staff for their work on this, it is believed that overall this will benefit the industry.

eLicensing Update – Collaborative work with DAS continues. There has been progress toward the transition to e-licensing. All practitioners will have the certification expiration date updated to January 31 of the year following when their current certification period expires.

Enforcement Actions, Exams – Nick shared a graphic illustrating the age disparities of the different certification levels. Based on the age of practitioners and the requirements for an exam except forest products harvester, it is anticipated to move to two certification levels in the future, forester and logger.

Enforcement actions – complaint calls have slowed. State lands management staff have many ongoing encroachment actions. There is one case that has been lingering for over three years and the associated trial has been postponed another time.

Municipal FPA regs – Seventeen of twenty municipalities have resolved their issues with municipal forest practice regulations. Two are in the process of writing new regulations and one is rescinding. Nick to meet with the Town of Woodbury IWA in July.

Division of Forestry Staffing – there is one vacancy in the State Lands Management program. Tom McGrade left the agency. Tom McGrade was a great asset to DEEP and he will be greatly missed. Les Welker has accepted the Partnership Coordinator position in the Urban & Community Forestry Program. Les will be transitioning from working as a consultant with WMI in service to DEEP to a permanent DEEP employee. WMI will refill the position that Les is vacating.

Deputy Commissioner Trumbull will be returning from leave in a few weeks. Justin Davis, BNR Bureau Chief has been acting DC while Mason was out. Justin had an opportunity a few weeks ago to do a field tour with State Lands Management staff.

#### Additional Items of Interest

Chris – The 2025 PA490 Forest Land Valuation will need to be calculated. This could prove challenging since a portion of the formula is stumpage value but UMass had paused collecting stumpage value data for several years. It is possible that the value will stay the same due to lack of data. A survey has been sent to CT Certified Forest Practitioners requesting stumpage value information.

Joan – Timpro will host a CEU program this fall on worker health and safety in cooperation with Erica Scott, PhD.

Connecticut will host the 2025 Society of American Foresters National Convention. More information about the Convention can be found here: [Registration](#)

Meeting closed at 10:40. Next meeting will be scheduled for October.

## 2025 Legislative Tracker – Forestry Related Bills

Updated 7/02/25 for FPAB & DoF Senior Staff

[2025HB-05004-R00-HB.DOCX](#) AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES AND ASSOCIATED JOB SECTORS.

**Information on Underlying Bill:** [HB05004 \(Chrome users: right click open in new tab\)](#)

**Last Action:** Signed by Governor 7/1/2025 [Public Act No. 25-125](#) [\[doc\]](#)

**Sponsors:** *Environment Committee; Rep. Ritter, M. 001 ; Rep. Rojas, J. 009*  
**Committees:** *Environment Committee*

Statement of Purpose: To protect the state's environment while providing for the development of renewable energy sources and related job sectors in a manner that reduces costs connected with such protections and development

[Bill Analysis for file copy 821](#)

§ 12 — NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS INITIATIVE Requires DEEP to (1) evaluate how to integrate and advance nature-based solutions in specified programs to support climate change mitigation and adaptation, ecosystem resilience, and biodiversity; (2) consider specified best practices as part of this evaluation; and (3) post the evaluation on its website, hold a listening session for public comment, and give it to specified state agencies for their review and input

**Evaluation Development** The bill requires the commissioner, as part of the evaluation, to consider best practices to encourage the use of the state's ecosystems to naturally sequester and store carbon, reduce GHG emissions, increase biodiversity, and protect against climate change impacts. These best practices include the following:

1. increasing carbon sequestration through increased forest acreage (e.g., by reforestation); 2. controlling invasive species; 3. encouraging soil health across all landscapes; 4. protecting carbon stocks by avoiding conversion of forests and wetlands to other purposes; 5. restoring habitats to improve biodiversity; 8. improving air quality and reducing urban heat island effects through urban forestry and increasing green spaces;

§ 16 — OPEN SPACE AND WATERSHED LAND ACQUISITION GRANT PROGRAM GRANTS FOR URBAN AGRICULTURE USE **ELIMINATED**

Broadens the purposes for which certain OSWA grants may be used to include repurposing open space land for urban agricultural use Funds Earmarked for Wildfire Risk Mitigation. The bill authorizes the DEEP commissioner to allocate up to **10% of the total amount of OSWA program funds to mitigate wildfire risks** on protected property by managing vegetative fuel loads (i.e. plant material that can act as fuel). These funds can be used for these purposes on property purchased or protected through the program, including properties already protected by the program.

[Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program](#): Eligible Entities - municipalities, nonprofit land conservation organizations and water companies

Under the bill, the commissioner must (1) post the nature-based solutions initiative program evaluation on DEEP's website by July 1, 2026, for review and written comment and (2) hold a listening session after the report is posted to obtain public comment. She must also give it to the following agencies for review and input: the Agriculture, Housing, Insurance, Public Health, and Transportation departments; the Connecticut Green Bank; and OPM

[Fiscal Analysis for File Copy 821](#) **Section 12** requires DEEP to evaluate various nature-based solutions and to consider best practices when identifying the best solutions. This is not anticipated to result in a cost to DEEP as they have the staff and expertise necessary to complete the nature-based solution requirements. **Section 16** expands eligible projects under the protected open space and watershed land acquisition grant program. These changes are not anticipated to result in additional costs to the state, as no new funding is designated for the program. However, these changes could result in a redistribution of funds, which could impact grant recipients.

[2025HB-05013-R00-HB.DOCX](#)

AN ACT ADDING CERTAIN PLANTS TO THE INVASIVE PLANTS LIST.

Information on Underlying Bill: [HB05013 \(Chrome users: right click open in new tab\)](#)

Last Action: 6/25/25 Transmitted by Secretary of the State to Governor

Sponsors: *Environment Committee; Rep. Gresko, J. 121 ; Rep. Bumgardner, A. 041*

Committees: *Environment Committee*

Statement of Purpose: To prohibit the sale, use and distribution of Japanese barberry and burning bush in the state

Prohibits importing; moving (except for eradication, research, or educational purposes); selling; purchasing; transplanting; cultivating (except for research purposes); or distributing the following plants or their reproductive portions (e.g., seeds, flowers, roots, tubers):

#### [Bill Analysis](#)

1. beginning on the bill's passage, the star of Bethlehem;
2. beginning October 1, 2028, the Glossy buckthorn, European buckthorn, reed canary grass, winged euonymus, European privet, black locust, miscanthus, and Japanese barberry; and
3. beginning October 1, 2030, the Norway maple.

DEEP Testimony supports.

[2025HB-07138-R00-HB.DOCX](#)

AN ACT CONCERNING A PROPERTY OWNER'S LIABILITY FOR THE EXPENSES OF REMOVING A FALLEN TREE OR TREE LIMB.

Information on Underlying Bill: [HB07138 \(Chrome users: right click open in new tab\)](#)

Last Action: 5/7/25 Referred by House to Committee on Insurance and Real Estate **DID NOT PASS**

Sponsors: *Judiciary Committee*

Committees: *Judiciary Committee*

Statement of Purpose: To impose liability on certain owners of real property for the expenses of removing a tree or tree limb that falls on an adjoining owner's private real property.

Many Exemptions including those previously requested by DEEP. Formerly HB 6169

[2025HB-06263-R00-HB.DOCX](#) AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE AND PURCHASE OF GAS-POWERED HAND-HELD OR BACKPACK LEAF BLOWERS BY STATE AGENCIES.

Information on Underlying Bill: [HB06263 \(Chrome users: right click open in new tab\)](#)

Last Action: 4/14/2025 File Number 681 **DID NOT PASS**

Sponsors: *Environment Committee; Rep. Berger-Girvalo, A. 111 ; Sen. Kushner, J. S24*

Committees: *Environment Committee*

Statement of Purpose: To eventually prohibit the use of hand-held or backpack gas-powered leaf blowers in the state.

DEEP concerns Re; Wildfire suppression and implanting prescribed burns.

Section 1. (NEW) (Effective October 1, 2025) (a) On and after September 1, 2027, the Departments of Administrative Services, Energy and Environmental Protection and Transportation shall, within available appropriations, purchase, lease or acquire electric hand-held or push lawn mowers, leaf blowers and lawn trimmers for state agencies for landscaping services on state-owned property if:

(1) **Such machinery is functionally equivalent to any such gas-powered machinery,** and (2) the useful life of similar gas-powered machinery owned, leased or acquired by such agencies has expired

(c) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this section,

said **commissioners may make an exception** to such purchase, lease and acquisition requirements if fiscal resources or agency operations depend on the utilization of specific equipment, including, but not limited to, the following operations: (1) Abating or preventing damage during a declared emergency or for equipment used by first responders to provide emergency services, (2) conducting fire hazard reduction and post-fire recovery activities, (3) managing riparian, forest or grassland areas, or (4) maintaining public safety.

[2025HB-06830-R00-HB.DOCX](#)

AN ACT CONCERNING TRAINING FOR MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES OF INLAND WETLANDS AGENCIES.

Information on Underlying Bill: [HB06830 \(Chrome users: right click open in new tab\)](#)

Last Action: 3/5/2025 File Number 41 **DID NOT PASS**

Sponsors: *Planning and Development Committee; Rep. Gresko, J. 121 ; Rep. Delnicki, T. 014*

Committees: *Planning and Development Committee*

Statement of Purpose: To require the completion of an online training program by members and staff of inland wetlands agencies.

DEEP Supports with one concern regarding hiring specificity. See Public Testimony

[Bill Analysis](#) This bill requires **all inland wetlands agency members and employees** to complete the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's (DEEP) inland wetlands agency comprehensive training program. Under current law, just one member or staff person from each agency must complete the training and each agency must annually hold a meeting at which the information is summarized for its members. Current law just requires one be trained.

[2025HB-06851-R00-HB.DOCX](#)

AN ACT CONCERNING PURPLE PROPERTY BORDERS AS WARNING TO TRESPASSERS.

Information on Underlying Bill: [HB06851 \(Chrome users: right click open in new tab\)](#)

Last Action: 4/28/2025 Tabled for the Calendar, House **DID NOT PASS**

Sponsors: *Public Safety and Security Committee; Rep. Boyd, P. 050 ; Rep. Fishbein, C. 090*

Committees: *Public Safety and Security Committee*

Statement of Purpose: To provide that purple painted property borders serve as a warning to trespassers

[Bill Analysis](#) **SUMMARY** Existing law makes someone guilty of 3rd degree criminal trespass if the person, knowing that he or she is not licensed or privileged to do so, enters or remains in areas that are posted in a way set by law or reasonably likely to come to an intruder's attention. This bill explicitly makes painting a restricted area's borders purple a type of posting covered by this law. By law, this kind of criminal trespass is a class C misdemeanor punishable by up to three months in prison, up to a \$500 fine, or both.

[2025HB-07174-R00-HB.DOCX](#)

AN ACT CONCERNING RIPARIAN BUFFERS AND ASSOCIATED ENVIRONMENTAL PROVISIONS.

Information on Underlying Bill: [HB07174 \(Chrome users: right click open in new tab\)](#)

Last Action: 6/25/2025, Signed by the Governor *Special Act 25-12*

Sponsors: *Environment Committee; Rep. Mushinsky, M. 085 ; Rep. Bumgardner, A. 041*

Committees: *Environment Committee*

Statement of Purpose: To establish protections for riparian buffer zones, protect fishways along certain water passages and require certain insurance surcharge fees for environmental measures.

**DEEP Testimony OPPOSES** DEEP LWRD and Forestry Concerns. Forestry is concerned permitted as of right activities may be clouded by purposed language. Explicit exemptions for conservation activities now included.

**explicitly (a) excludes native vegetation clear cutting in wetland or watercourse areas from an "as of right" use** and (b) includes revegetation in riparian areas with native vegetation and removing invasive species as a nonregulated permitted use;

**MAJOR CHANGE;** Explanation The bill establishes a working group to identify where and how protection of vegetated riparian buffers in the state can be incorporated into statutes and regulations to improve the health of and protect the state's watercourses resulting in no fiscal impact to the state because the working group has the expertise to meet the requirements of the amendment. **Working group membership includes a member of Farm Bureau and a certified forester.**

[2025SB-00611-R00-SB.DOCX](#)

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A MAXIMUM CHARGE FOR CERTAIN OCCUPATIONAL LICENSES, CERTIFICATIONS, PERMITS AND REGISTRATIONS. **DID NOT PASS**

Statement of Purpose: To eliminate application review fees charged by state licensing boards and limit the amount the state may charge for an occupational license to not more than one hundred dollars

To provide that neither the Commissioner of Consumer Protection nor the Department of Consumer Protection may charge certain individuals a license, permit, certification or registration fee in an amount that is greater than one hundred dollars per license, certification, permit or registration year.

5/8/2025

Immediate Transmittal

**Does not** pertain to Sec 23 – Forest Practices Act

DRAFT



State of Connecticut

Regulation of

**Department of Energy and Environmental Protection**

**Concerning**

**Certification of Forest Practitioners: Applications, Issuance of Certificate, and Continuing Education Credits.**

Section 1. Section 23-65h-1(c) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies is amended to read as follows:

**General Requirements**

**Applications**

(c) Applications for forest practitioner certification and recertification shall be made on forms prescribed and furnished by the commissioner and shall require information as to the applicant's name, mailing address, telephone number, business address, business telephone number, residence, [educational background,] a detailed summary of technical experience, a record of any continuing education courses or workshops successfully completed within the previous five years, and information concerning whether the applicant has engaged in any of the activities set forth in subdivisions (1) to (3), inclusive, of subsection (a) of section 23-65o of the general statutes, or has been convicted of a felony associated with the conduct of a regulated forest practice.

Section 2. Section 23-65h-1(k) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies is amended to read as follows:

**Issuance of Certificate**

(k) The commissioner shall issue a certificate to any applicant who has satisfied all of the requirements for certification set forth in this section or otherwise has met the requisite experience requirements of subdivision (3) of subsection (c) of section 23-65h of the general statutes. Certificates shall be valid for [four] five years from the date of issuance and shall show the full name of the certificate holder, the type of certification granted, the certificate number, the date of expiration of the



certification, and shall be signed by the commissioner. The commissioner shall also issue wallet cards containing the same information as the full size certificate.

Section 3. Sections 23-65h-1(o) to (q), inclusive, of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies are amended to read as follows:

### **Continuing Education Standards for Renewal of Certification**

(NEW) (o) In accordance with section 23-65i of the general statutes, all certified forest practitioners shall [participate] obtain, during the period of such certification [in a relevant program of professional education to improve or maintain professional forestry skills that is sponsored by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, the New England Society of American Foresters, The University of Connecticut, Yale University or the Connecticut Cooperative Extension System, or in another program approved by the Department] continuing education units (CEU's) from the following two categories:

(1) Category 1. CEU's shall be issued for participation in a relevant program of professional education to improve or maintain professional forestry skills that is sponsored by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, the New England Society of American Foresters, The University of Connecticut, Yale University or the Connecticut Cooperative Extension System, or in another program approved by the department.

(2) Category 2. CEU's shall be issued for participation in professional development activities undertaken outside of normal job responsibilities and which involve active participation and significant contribution to the profession, including but not limited to:

(i) Conducting presentations, teaching, and composing publications on subject matter which qualifies under Category 1

(ii) Service on state or local boards of equivalent forestry related service organizations

(iii) Service on local municipal boards affecting land use

(iv) Service on national or state board of directors or equivalent of a profession representing forestry or allied natural resource professions

(v) active participation as a member of a committee which supports subsections (ii) through (iv) above.



(p) Assigning continuing education units (CEU's). Any person may request that the commissioner approve any workshops, meetings, college level credit courses, courses, seminars, [or] field sessions, presentations, lessons, publications, or service [as having substantial educational value] for certified forest practitioners and assign an appropriate number of CEU's in accordance with subsection (q) of this section, below. Any person requesting such approval and assignment of CEU's shall provide to the commissioner the following relevant information:

- (1) Date of event
- (2) Title
- (3) Agenda
- (4) Name and Title of Instructors
- (5) Sponsoring Organization
- (6) Hours of Duration and/or credits assigned
- (7) Classroom and Field Hours
- (8) Contact Person
- (9) Name of Board or Committee and Title of Participant

#### **Assignment of CEU Credits**

(q) The commissioner shall review all information provided in accordance with subsection (p) of this section, above and, if the commissioner finds that the workshop, meeting, course, seminar, tour, field session, [or] college level credit course, presentation, lesson, publication, or service proposed for CEU credit provides substantial education in the professional forestry skills and professional functions, or involves active participation and significant contribution to the profession, encompassed by one or more of the forest practitioner certifications, CEU's shall be assigned as follows:

(1) one (1) CEU shall be assigned for each [full three (3) hours] hour of duration of qualifying workshops, meetings, courses, seminars, [or] field sessions, or non-professional or non-technical presentations and conducted workshops on other forest related activities.

(2) [four (4)] twelve (12) CEU's shall be assigned for each credit hour in a qualifying college level credit course.

(3) two (2) CEU's shall be assigned for each hour of duration conducting or leading professional or technical presentations or workshops.

(4) five (5) CEU's shall be assigned per calendar year for chairing a board or subcommittee of a board

(5) two (2) CEU's shall be signed per calendar year for active committee involvement



### **Renewal of Certification**

(6) Each applicant for renewal of Forester certification shall participate, during the period of such certification, [in a program of professional education equivalent to twelve (12)] and obtain thirty-six (36) CEU's. Category 2 CEU's shall not exceed twelve (12) CEU's during the period of such certification.

(7) Each applicant for renewal of Supervising Forest Products Harvester certification shall participate, during the period of such certification, [in a program of professional education equivalent to twelve (12)] and obtain twenty-four (24) CEU's. Category 2 CEU's shall not exceed eight (8) CEU's during the period of such certification.

(8) Each applicant for renewal of Forest Products Harvester certification shall participate, during the period of such certification, [in a program of professional education equivalent to twelve (12)] and obtain eighteen (18) CEU's. Category 2 CEU's shall not exceed six (6) CEU's during the period of such certification.

### **Statement of Purpose**

Changes to Section 1 will remove the required educational background on the certification application. There are no education requirements to obtain certification in Connecticut as a Certified Forest Practitioner. This information has not been utilized by the FPA Program and is unnecessary information for the purposes of this application. Removal of this information collection will reduce the time needed to apply for certification.

Changes to Section 2 will extend the certification period from four to five years. The Forest Practices Act Program currently operates solely with paper applications and records and is moving to an electronic system that shall be more efficient and consistent with other certification programs within and across State Agencies. The eLicensing system has a pre-existing 5-year certification period category with expiration date of January 31 of the certification year. This protocol has previously been established by DEEP Pesticides when that program was converted to eLicensing. Creating a new protocol in the vendor's system would delay transition to online certification management a considerable amount of time. Additionally, CGS Sec. 23-65h(c)(4) allows the Commissioner to issue a certification for a period not to exceed five years, As such, this regulation change is consistent with the statutes.

Changes to Section 3 will amend the Continuing Education Requirements for Certified Forest Practitioners pursuant to RCSA Sec. 23-65h-1(o) through RCSA Sec. 23-65h-1(q). The new language allows for the assignment of Continuing Education Units (CEUs, continuing education required pursuant to C.G.S. Section 23-65h) beyond the previous scope that limited CEUs to only educational courses. These changes will create two categories of CEUs, the first including educational courses, the second including



participation in professional development activities undertaken outside of normal job responsibilities which involve active participation and significant contribution to the profession. These changes align with the Society of American Foresters (SAF), and the Forest Practices Advisory Board (FPAB), consistent with its role in C.G.S. Section 23-65g, has voted to maintain consistency with these standards and to provide a direct and easily understandable format for applicants and practitioners to comply with the Regulations.

Additionally, assignment of CEUs will be amended to (1) one CEU per hour of duration of a qualifying course from the current 3 hour duration to provide consistency with other states and organizations, as well as ease in calculation of CEU assignment.

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