

Massacoe State Forest

Over 100 Years of Forest Management

History: Massacoe State Forest is located in Simsbury, the birthplace of Gifford Pinchot, the Father of American Forestry. His family founded the Yale School of Forestry in 1900. This forest has seen over 100 years of sustainable forest management. It consists of the Massacoe Block (122 acres) and Great Pond Block (296 acres). The Massacoe Block was acquired in 1908 to demonstrate that woodlands damaged by fire could once again be made productive. The Great Pond Block was bequeathed to the State of Connecticut by forester James Goodwin in 1967 with the stipulation that it continue to be actively managed as a State Forest. Goodwin planted thousands of pine trees, and pruned, thinned, and harvested them. Great Pond Forest was named Connecticut's 1st Tree Farm in 1956 by the American Tree Farm System. Since 1972, Massacoe State Forest has supplied 616,840 board feet of logs and 987 cords of firewood.



Forest Management Plan:

- 91% of the Forest is sawtimber size (55% oak, 34% white pine plantations).
- Young forest and early successional habitats are lacking.
- Objectives: Continue the management goals of James Goodwin; favor white pine on suitable sites and create a diversity of species and age classes by using even and uneven-aged management. White and red oaks will be favored and retained.



Sale W-424 at a Glance:

- 81 acres.
- *Natural Diversity Database review (NDDDB) indicated no Threatened, Endangered, or Species of Concern and Fisheries and Wildlife Division Biologists noted no concerns in this area.*
- 124,092 board feet of mostly scarlet oak, red oak, and black oak, and 432 cords of mostly hardwoods will be harvested.
- Three bids were received in 2017, and the sale was awarded to J&K Logging in 2018, with an original expiration date of October 31, 2019. The expiration date was extended to 10/31/20 because of extreme rainfall in 2018 (4th wettest year on record) and lack of frozen ground the last two winters.
- Harvest activities will occur only on weekdays between 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.

Benefits to Wildlife:

While this section of Massacoe State Forest has no recorded occurrences of state-listed species, it certainly provides habitat for a variety of wildlife. Remaining trees within the harvest area should result in increased production of hard and soft mast, such as acorns, hickory nuts, and pine and hemlock cones, which provide food for many wildlife species. Dense understory cover for wildlife will be created, and snag and den trees (if not hazardous) will be left standing. No cutting will take place around the vernal pool and wetland area.

At this time of year, most small birds are fledging their first broods and young raptors are leaving their nests. Cutting now, when young can fly but before re-nesting, will reduce impacts to breeding birds. Other wildlife using the area for foraging or movement will shift their activities while the activity is ongoing, but will move back in once the harvest is completed. Healthy forest management is important for wildlife conservation, and the long-term conservation benefits outweigh the short-term costs. Regenerating forests consume and sequester carbon dioxide, allow a diversity of plants to regrow, and provide rich habitat into the future.



In a warming and changing climate, diversity and resiliency are key features of habitat necessary for wildlife. While mature forests are essential for certain wildlife and plant species, a network of diverse habitats also is necessary for at-risk species, resiliency against future landscape changes, and regeneration of a healthy, mature forest. To achieve these long-term benefits, forest improvement activities will have temporary impacts, and they are implemented at a time that minimizes those impacts.

For more information on the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Division of Forestry, please visit <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEPForestry>. Questions? Contact deep.forestry@ct.gov.