



## **Maine Woodland Owners achieves 10,000 acre forest conservation milestone**

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With the recent donation of lands in New Gloucester and Hollis to its land trust, Maine Woodland Owners has announced that it has permanently conserved more than 10,000 acres of working forestland throughout the state of Maine, according to a news release from the association.

This milestone will be celebrated at the Maine Woodland Owners Annual Meeting and Forestry Forum on Wednesday, Jan. 15, during the Maine Agricultural Trades Show at the Augusta Civic Center in the Augusta Room, 2nd Floor, North Wing. The event will run from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and will include presentations with perspectives and up-to-date information about invasive plants and insects impacting forests, how climate change affects Maine's woods, new opportunities emerging in the wood products market, and observing and writing about nature.

Speakers will include Nancy Olmstead, invasive plant biologist with the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, and Allison Kanoti, state entomologist who will present information about managing woodland invasive plants and provide an update about the emerald ash borer infestation in Maine and other pests and diseases that affect woodlands in the state now and in the future.

Dr. Josh Henry, CEO of GO Lab, will speak about an aspect of Maine's new forest economy and how his Belfast-based company recently opened a wood residuals manufacturing plant in a former paper mill in Madison. Additionally, Dr. Ivan Fernandez, Distinguished Maine Professor of the Climate Change Institute & School of Forest Resources at the University of Maine, will provide information about the impacts of climate change on Maine's woodlands.

The keynote speaker will be Bernd Heinrich, a professor emeritus in the biology department at the University of Vermont, who lives on 500 acres of woodlands outside of Weld and has written more than 20 books about the Maine woods, nature, and biology. His most recent book, "White Feathers: The Nesting Lives of Tree Swallows," will be released this month and will be available for purchase at the event.

Maine Woodland Owners, previously known as Small Woodland Owners Association of Maine or SWOAM, was formed 45 years ago as an educational organization dedicated to providing knowledge and technical support for Maine's small woodland owners.

It is the only statewide organization supporting Maine's 86,000 family woodland owners and is committed to responding to the needs of its members and the public as they conduct

long-term planning for their woodlots. Its goal is to increase landowner engagement and long-term woodland stewardship to ensure the health of Maine's forests.

Maine is witnessing a major shift in family woodland ownership that reflects a trend of an aging population taking action to protect their legacy. Nearly two thirds of Maine's small woodlot owners are 55 and older which will soon result in a mass turnover of forestland ownership now and for the next decade to come. This points to potential wholesale change in forest conservation for much of the 5.5 million acres of land made up of 10-500 acre parcels which is collectively one third of Maine's woodlands, according to the release.

Maine Woodland Owners received its first donation in 1991 — a 65-acre property located in the town of Sweden. Since then, Maine Woodland Owners land trust has been addressing the need to conserve working forestland that is responsibly, sustainably managed. Opened to the public, each parcel is guided by a management plan that meets internationally recognized standards. The program also serves as a demonstration of how small woodlands can contribute to the local economy, improve the forest, enhance wildlife habitat, and conserve special places.

"Most of the people who have donated lands to Maine Woodland Owners come from different walks of life, different experiences with their land, and sometimes from different parts of the country. But the common thread is a love for their woods, the wish to have that land conserved and properly managed, and the faith the donors have in our organization." said Maine Woodland Owners Executive Director Tom Doak, according to the release.

Source: <https://www.centralmaine.com/2020/01/07/maine-woodland-owners-achieves-10000-acre-forest-conservation-milestone/>