

NORTHAMPTON, MASSACHUSETTS

**“STEWARDSHIP” OF OUR PUBLIC FORESTS THAT
PROTECT THE TOWN DRINKING WATER SUPPLY**













The Northampton plan calls for logging 401 of its 3000 acres of public watershed forest in just the first 2 years of the “Forest Stewardship” program.

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The timber industry, and foresters (with a vested interest), make nonsensical and scientifically unsupportable claims that logging is done to “help” water quality.

“It’s hard to sell New England Forestry Foundation memberships on the notion that we harvest trees. We have to frame it that we protect land — we have to go at it obliquely.”

~Whit Beals for the New England Forestry Foundation, May 2010
www.maforests.org/FF%20Notes%20May%202010%20-%20NEFF.doc

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The United States Environmental Protection Agency says:

“Local impacts of timber harvesting and road construction on water quality can be severe, especially in smaller headwater streams.” “These effects are of greatest concern where silvicultural activity occurs in high-quality watershed areas that provide municipal water supplies or support cold-water fisheries.”

<http://water.epa.gov/polwaste/nps/czara/ch3-1.cfm>

Harvard Forest says:

“All evidence suggests that harvesting exerts greater impacts on ecosystem processes than leaving disturbed or stressed forests intact. A conservative alternative hypothesis for the long-term management of watershed lands might be proposed: the elimination of harvesting and its associated impacts (e.g., soil compaction, road development and improvement) will yield forest and landscape conditions that maintain and improve water quality in the face of ongoing disturbances and stresses.”

“Although intuitive support exists for the development of “protection forests” through silvicultural approaches to increase the resistance and resilience of forests to pests, pathogens, and natural disturbances, empirical data to support the approach are lacking. Not only is there sparse evidence that such approaches achieve their goals of increasing resistance and resilience, little evidence suggests that natural disturbances yield negative functional consequences. Therefore, current management regimes aiming to increase long-term forest health and water quality are ongoing “experiments” lacking controls. In many situations good evidence from true experiments and “natural experiments” suggests that the best management approach is to do nothing.”

http://harvardforest.fas.harvard.edu/publications/pdfs/Foster_ConervationBio_2006.pdf

How can a “progressive”, wealthy, city like Northampton, with widespread sentiment to protect public forests, and a stated desire to do something about global warming, cut its own important public forests while expecting poor third world countries to protect *their* forests?

Logging is very carbon intensive. One of the best ways we can help reduce our “carbon footprint” is to leave our public forests alone so they can continue growing in order to absorb and store carbon.

See: <http://www.maforests.org/Keeton.pdf>



All logging photos taken March 3, 2014, are of Northampton Public Water Supply Protection Forests, on Conway Road, Whately MA

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