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## **Continuing Forestry Education for Massachusetts Licensed Foresters**

The purpose of the continuing education requirement for renewal of a Massachusetts Forester License is to ensure that practitioners obtain current scientific and technical information.

Each licensed Forester is required to acquire 20 credits of continuing education annually in order to maintain their license. (DCR Forester **Department of Conservation and Recreation Forester Licensing Policies. 4/20/2007.** )

In recognition of the fact that learning and information acquisition can occur in different ways, continuing education opportunities to provide practitioners with current scientific and technical information can occur in several different formats:

### **Category I**

**EIGHT HOURS MINIMUM:** Organized course work or activities in forestry or forestry related subject matters such as silviculture, mensuration, forest pest management, habitat management, urban forestry, or forest policy. Category I courses include seminars, short courses, and workshops conducted or sponsored by public or private organizations, as well as technical sessions of SAF meetings or conferences. Credit will be approved only for subject matter directly related to forestry or forest resources. Credit accrues at the rate of one hour for each hour of actual participation.

### **Category II**

**TWELVE HOURS MAXIMUM:** Other organized course work or activities not specifically in forestry or forest-related areas, but which are professionally enriching or directly beneficial to the individual in his or her present position. Examples include general sessions of SAF or other professional meetings and course work in areas such as real estate, computer science, managerial and leadership skills, public speaking, or vertebrate zoology. Credit accrues at the same rate as for Category I.

### **Category III**

**TWELVE HOURS MAXIMUM:** Preparation, and presentation of course work or activities such as described in categories I and II that requires effort beyond the general scope of the individual's normal duties or job description. Credit accrues at the rate of 2 credits for each 1 hour of presentation.

### **Category IV**

**TEN HOURS MAXIMUM:** Preparation, writing and publication of forestry or forestry-related subject matter that requires effort beyond the general scope of the individual's normal duties or job description. Credit is 15 hours for each article that is technically reviewed and 5 hours for popular articles or series.

### **Category V**

**FOUR HOURS MAXIMUM:** Self-improvement in forestry and forestry-related subjects. Included is participation in or attendance at meetings not qualifying for category I or II, such as those conducted by state boards of forestry or forestry licensing committees. Also included is self-improvement through reading appropriate technical publications or viewing audiovisual presentations on technical forestry subjects. Credit accrues at the rate of 1 hour for each hour of an activity.

### **Category VI**

**TEN HOURS MAXIMUM:** holding elected or appointed office or active committee assignments in the SAF, Massachusetts Association of Professional Foresters, or allied professional organizations such as the Wildlife Society, Society for Range Management, or Association of Consulting Foresters. Credit is 5 hours per year for elected office or chair of committee and 2 hours per year for active committee membership.

Given the six different categories of continuing education and the diversity of continuing education offerings and opportunities that exist, there is room for interpretation when evaluating the possibility of credit for purposes of renewal of a Massachusetts Forester License.

The guiding principles in evaluating a potential opportunity to determine its value and credit-worthiness for continuing forestry education are:

1. **Does it provide the opportunity for the practitioner to obtain current scientific and technical information (i.e., analogous to Categories I and II, above)?** This is important, as sciences related to the conservation of forests, and related technical information have advanced since licensed foresters were students in college programs. The need for Massachusetts Licensed Foresters to continue their educations and acquire the most contemporary and relevant information is clear, especially in light of the importance of forests.
2. **Does it provide an opportunity for increased professional growth and development through organizational leadership, presentation, writing, or other means of professional communication (analogous to Categories III, IV, and VI, above)?** This is important, since one of the challenges of forestry is to clearly and effectively communicate the complexities of forests and their conservation.

**The result of these two criteria is that by improved knowledge of scientific and technical information and / or enhanced professional leadership or communication, the licensed forester is better able to engage in the practice of forestry in Massachusetts than if they did not participate in the proposed activity. Will the licensed forester learn more scientific and technical information, or acquire additional leadership, organizational, or professional communication skills as a result of the opportunity?**

**Note that the MA Forester Licensing Board accepts any event or opportunity that has already been evaluated as having SAF credit.**

Some examples of ideas that do **not** meet the continuing education credit-worthiness standard include:

- a. informally teaching a friend how to run equipment
- b. participating in woodsmen competition events
- c. posting opinion and information in an online blog

While all of these examples have merit, in terms of publicizing the importance of forests and forestry (e.g., appearing in a fair booth; posting online materials) or personally assisting a friend to run equipment safely, they do not meet the standard of a forester acquiring current scientific and professional information or acquiring or honing professional skills, thereby allowing the forester to better engage in the practice of forestry in Massachusetts. Foresters may appeal a decision on credit worthiness of a proposed activity to the full Forester Licensing Board.