

NRC 597C: Case Studies in Conservation [3 credits]
Spring 2012 semester [SPIRE # 55476]
Tuesday/Thursday, 4:00 – 5:15 pm, 105 Holdsworth Hall
<http://blogs.umass.edu/nrc597c-dbk/>

Instructor: David Kittredge. 327 Holdsworth Hall. 545-2943; dbk@eco.umass.edu

Background: Landscapes dominated by private ownerships have pressing conservation needs. Stakes are high in many places as conservation options are lost due to land conversion and development. Massachusetts Audubon estimates that in the recent past the Commonwealth has lost as much as 40 acres of open space to development on a daily basis. One strategy is for the state or federal government to buy land in fee, and this has been done successfully, resulting in the creation of the White Mountain National Forest, various wildlife refuges, national seashores, and state and national parks. Alternatively, there are many examples of conservation and land protection in a parcelized or fragmented landscape dominated by private ownership which are *not* the result of federal or state fee simple acquisition. In many cases, towns, non-governmental organizations, partnerships, and individuals respond to need and act at a smaller spatial and financial scale but with significant conservation results. Indeed, these groups and individuals can often act with greater speed and local credibility than larger public entities.

This course will review real-world actual case studies in conservation and land protection, with a focus on locally initiated, small-scale success stories, described by outside speakers. The course is intended for the dual audiences of:

- Currently enrolled **graduate and undergraduate students** in natural resource disciplines (e.g., fisheries, wildlife, forestry) and other relevant areas (e.g., resource economics, geosciences, regional planning). These future resource managers and stewards need to have an understanding of tools and tactics that can be applied in different circumstances to conserve land; and
- **Practicing natural resource managers** in private and public sectors, as well as **locally-based conservation volunteers** who are active in land trusts, Conservation Commissions, and other groups. These people are currently involved at the front lines of conservation, often at the local level, and would benefit from knowing what has been successful in other places.

Requirements:

Visitor summaries. A 1-2-page summary of presentations made by guests is required. A minimum of 10 summaries is the baseline expectation. Please see the additional 1-page description of this assignment for more information on format, deadlines, and overall expectation. Summaries are due 2 weeks following the presentation, but may be submitted later and suffer a 7-point deduction. No Summary may be submitted after Tuesday, 8 May, 5:00 pm.

Professional Practicum Experience. This is designed to provide the student with an opportunity to acquire professionally relevant experience in land protection and conservation by working with people in land trusts, agencies, and other conservation organizations. The expectation is that students will spend a minimum of eight hours

with conservation professionals, and prepare a final summary describing your activities and what you learned. **Important: The student** is responsible for designing the Professional Practicum Experience (i.e., select the organization and people; contact and make arrangements; travel to and participate in the organization and its activities; prepare a synthesis summary of the activities). This is an opportunity to design an experience that meets the needs and interests of individual students. The synthesis summary (4-5 pages describing the Professional Practicum Experience and lessons learned) is due Tuesday, 8 May, 5:00 pm. Please see the 1-page description of this course requirement for a more thorough explanation of the assignment and deliverable. Note: No grade of INC will be issued due to a failure to complete the Professional Practicum Experience or any other required elements of the course on time.

Take-home mid-term examination. This is an open-book, take-home exam. It will be distributed in class on Tuesday, 6 March, and due one week later on Tuesday, 13 March. You may consult any written materials (hard copy or online), but not other students. This must be your own, original and independent work.

Basis for grading:

Visitor summaries (minimum of 10)	40%
Mid-term take-home exam (distributed March 6; <u>Due March 13, 5:00 pm</u>):	25%
Professional Practicum Experience (final summary is <u>due Tuesday, 8 May, 5:00 pm</u>):	35%

Incomplete: No grade of INC will be issued due to a failure to complete the Professional Practicum Experience or any other required elements of the course on time.

1-credit option: as an alternative to taking the course for three credits and meeting all requirements, students may enroll for 1 credit of independent study (e.g., NRC 596), and meet the requirements of:

0-credit option: The Tuesday afternoon seminars are free and open to the public. *Just come and learn* about conservation organizations, practices, and success stories.

Prerequisites: Ability and willingness to *travel on your own [or with one other student]* to actually visit the site of your Professional practicum experience (*one or possibly more times, as needed*).

Waiver:

Students will be required to make independent trips to visit the site of a case study, and hereby release and agree to hold blameless the University, Department, and Instructor from any and all liability or loss resulting from acts of omissions.

ACADEMIC HONESTY: Academic dishonesty is a violation of the spirit and regulations of the University, and will not be tolerated. Examples of academic dishonesty include cheating, plagiarism, and fabrication. Any student found to be in violation of University Academic Honesty regulations will automatically receive a failing grade for the course. For further information on academic honesty regulations, please consult:

http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/

Attendance: A major portion of the learning from this class will come from the presentations made by guests who visit with us on Tuesdays. Summaries of their presentations represent 40% of the final grade. It will not be acceptable to submit a summary of a presentation for which a student was not present. **You must be present for the presentation in order to prepare and submit a summary.** Attendance will be taken on Tuesdays. Please make every effort to attend the presentations made by our visiting guests. They give up their time and drive in some cases considerable distance to make an investment in your education. I am unable to compensate them for their time, effort, or transportation. Their "payoff" or return on investment is a room with an engaged, inquisitive audience that actively participates and asks questions.

Course schedule: The class meets every Tuesday **and** Thursday, from 4 – 5:15 pm in 105 Holdsworth Hall. Seminar presentations of cases by outside speakers will be each Tuesday, and class discussion will be on Thursdays. See the schedule below for a list of speakers and topics.

Case Studies in Conservation. NRC 597C

Spring 2012 seminar schedule

Seminars meet **Tuesdays** from 4 – 5:15 pm, in Holdsworth Hall 105

January 31	Emily Boss. Land Protection Specialist, Franklin Land Trust <i>Regional land trust land protection examples with a focus on agriculture.</i>
February 7	Bob Wilber. Director of Land Protection, Massachusetts Audubon Society <i>Land protection by a statewide conservation organization</i>
February 14	Wayne Feiden. Director of Planning and Development, City of Northampton <i>Land protection through zoning, municipal acquisition, easement, and limited development</i>
February 21	Andrew Bentley, CR Stewardship Assistant, and Sally Naser, CR Monitoring Specialist, The Trustees of Reservations. <i>Defense of conservation restrictions.</i>
February 28	Mary Alice Wilson. Rattlesnake Gutter Trust, Leverett, MA <i>The role of small, all-volunteer land trusts</i>
March 6	Chris Pryor. Forest Stewardship Coordinator, New England Forestry Foundation. <i>The importance of monitoring easements.</i>
March 13	Wendy Sweetser. Highlands Community Initiative and The Trustees of Reservations. <i>Community involvement and the Community Preservation Act</i>
March 27	Kristin DeBoer. Executive Director, Kestrel Trust. <i>Regional land trust land protection example(s).</i>
April 3	Brandon Kibbe. Land protection specialist, Mass Wildlife. <i>Land protection from the perspective of a state conservation agency</i>
April 10	Keith Ross. Senior Advisor, Landvest. <i>Aggregation of land protection projects: reducing cost, time, and energy, and stimulating interest.</i>
April 24	Tyler Van Fleet. MassConn partnership <i>Conservation at a regional scale through organizational partnerships</i>
May 1	Sonya LeClair. Programs Coordinator. New England Forestry Foundation. <i>The importance and power of working with volunteers to advance conservation at the local level.</i>