

RREA programs conducted by UMass Extension provide education and materials that address critical issues of importance to landowners, natural resource professionals, conservation organizations, natural resource-based business, and municipalities. These programs enable people to make informed decisions and take action to preserve or enhance the quality, productivity and sustainability of natural resources and ecosystems. Each dollar in RREA funds typically leverages between \$5 and \$10 in state, private, and/or local funds. In the past year RREA funds were used to support the following activities.

→ **ACORN** (<http://www.massacorn.net>) is an interactive website for landowners in the Westfield and Deerfield River watersheds of western Massachusetts. ACORN encourages landowners to share information and to see their property as part of a larger forest landscape. ACORN encourages participation and informed decision-making through use of an interactive map, threaded discussions, and an “Ask the Forester” page. It is funded through a \$420,000 USDA NRI integrated research/extension grant.

→ UMass Extension and UCONN Cooperative Extension, in partnership with the Quinebaug Shetucket National Heritage Corridor conduct joint programming via the **Green Valley Institute** (GVI). GVI provides training and education to landowners and community leaders on land and water resource protection and smart growth techniques. As a result of this program the town of Sturbridge, Massachusetts recently protected 945 acres of land in the town center, including over 800 acres of Old Sturbridge Village, an interactive historical museum.

→ The **Conservation Assessment and Prioritization System** (CAPS) is a computer software program and an approach to prioritizing land for conservation based on the assessment of habitat and biodiversity value for a variety of natural communities. Based on CAPS analyses, maps of high valued natural communities were created for towns in the Housatonic River watershed and the Highland Communities region of Massachusetts (<http://www.masscaps.org>).

Massachusetts RREA contact: Scott Jackson, Program Director,
Dept. of Natural Resources Conservation, Holdsworth Hall,
University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003.
Tel. (413) 545-4743. e-mail: sjackson@umext.umass.edu