



# Petersham Wood Policy & Wood Bank

## PETERSHAM WOOD POLICY

The Town of Petersham generates tree logs by the removal of dying trees. These trees are typically located along the road side (right of way) and become 'town property' when they are removed.

This Town Wood Policy is being adopted following deliberations by the Forest & Shade Tree Committee to provide a means of community support and a sense of fairness for the distribution of otherwise surplus property among Town residents.

In the process of generating a Town Wood Policy, the Forest & Shade Tree Committee also identified the value of and potential demand for a Town Wood Bank. The Wood Bank will be reviewed in May of 2015 to make any necessary improvement to the policy.

- For the purpose of this Policy, Town trees shall be those trees which have been removed:
  - In accordance with MGL Chapter 87 or
  - In accordance with the Scenic Roads Act or an Order of Conditions or other required authorization of the Conservation Commission or
  - By an act of nature/weather
- Planned removal of trees shall take place by or under the authority of:
  - Town Highway Department; or
  - Tree Warden; or
  - Professional tree company contracted by the town; or
  - Utility or similar public service company (e.g. National Grid)
- When town trees identified for removal are taken down the following rules and guidelines will apply:
  - 1) If wood is 5" to 15" in diameter (and falls within or adjacent to a single homeowner's property):
    - Wood will be left along the roadside. The diameter of wood left should be of a size suitable for homeowners to utilize for use on their own property.
    - The canopy of trees (tree tops) will not be left along the roadside, unless the abutting homeowner makes a request that it be left, in which case the homeowner must remove the wood to their property the same day.
    - Note: There is no guarantee that all wood of this size (5"-15") can or will be left for the use of homeowners. The Town's primary goals are to minimize roadside debris, to not hinder winter roadside clearance, and to prevent a future fire hazard.
  - 2) Abutters shall have first right of refusal of the wood. Abutters will be given notice of tree removal (by hearing postings or such other notice as may be given by the town under the circumstances). The responsibility will fall to the abutters to 'post' the wood that they want to claim. An abutter can do this in multiple ways:
    - Stake the wood with a ribbon or sign stating (as simple as with a sharpie marker on the ribbon or another legible way) their last name, that they want the wood, and the date by which they will remove it. (Note that tree canopies will be removed on the day of cutting.)
    - Call the Petersham Highway Department (PHD) to inform the Town that they want the wood.



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- 3) Abutters will be given to the date they stated (preferably no longer than one month) to clear the posted wood from the roadside. If more time is needed abutters shall contact the PHD. When the month window has passed, any local resident may clear the wood, unless the PHD has granted a time extension. If an extension has been granted an updated ribbon shall be added to denote the new date. If the PHD perceives the wood is a hindrance, it may remove the wood so that it may be added to the Wood Bank.
  - If trees have multiple abutters (for example on the Town Common), the wood will be transferred to the Wood Bank where the wood will be used for the purposes of the Town's common good.

### WOOD BANK POLICY

In many communities throughout Massachusetts, high heating costs have stressed households to stay warm. A Wood Bank (similar in concept to a Food Bank) has been a successful asset and public service in many New England communities experiencing this problem. The Petersham Wood Bank was the first to establish in Massachusetts and has been serving the community since November of 2014.

#### How the Policy Works

**Volunteer Days** – Monthly (optimally, weather and schedules permitting) a volunteer work day will be held to cut, split, and stack firewood at the Town Transfer Station. Firewood will be stacked into crates to create voucher portions of ½ cord of wood (+/-) and are covered to help limit the exposure to weather, while permitting airflow to help dry the wood.

#### **Town Volunteers might include:**

- Trained Town employees or qualified volunteers will be chainsaw operators. (All operators shall use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE): eye protection, hard helmet, hearing protection, gloves, chainsaw leg protection and boots).
- These individual shall be trained in safe operations of chainsaw use. These operators might include: PHD representatives, Tree Warden (& mutual town aid support), local professional arborists and foresters, or Petersham Fire Dept. or Petersham Police Dept. personnel ( The goal is to include local professional arborists and foresters and trained residents.)
- Cutters will begin before a 'splitting crew' arrives to generate rounds of wood to be split.
- A work day will be held typically from 9:00-2:00pm.
- The wood generated will be given to town residents in need of heating assistance, according to the following guidelines.

#### To Receive Wood

- Residents in need may simply follow the request procedure as follows:
  - Requesting resident visits the Town Hall or calls to speak to Steven Boudreau to express their interest in a Wood Bank voucher.
  - The only information requested is
    - If they are currently receiving fuel assistance. If they are the resident will receive first priority over other requests if vouchers are limited.
    - Name, address, phone and email – this information is collected for purposes of tracking to request future volunteer help to the Wood Bank and for grant writing purposes to show the Wood Bank is serving town residents.



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- Resident receives (by email or in person at the Town Hall) a voucher for a crate of wood.
  - Residents may request additional wood if needed. One voucher per household per month is available to residents when wood is available and suitable for burning with a moisture content below 18%.
- Residents provide voucher to Transfer Station Staff, when they come to pick up wood.
- Transfer Station Staff simply collects the voucher and returns to the Wood Bank envelope in the Tree Warden's mailbox at the Town Hall.
- Vouchers will be given out until all available wood available has all been distributed
- There is no limit to the amount of wood residents may receive in one year.

### **Other Notes**

- Businesses and the public may donate wood to the Wood Bank  
Volunteer help from the Lion's Club, Rotary Club, Petersham Center School, Police & Fire, Boys & Girls Scouts, and local area businesses are very welcomed