

Dear Members of the Campus Community,

Whether you have used the Norwottuck Rail Trail or only looked out from campus towards the Mt Tom range, you're certainly aware of the forested line that forms the southerly boundary of campus. This area has a wide mix of native and non-native trees, including a large number of red pines (*Pinus resinosa*), most of which were in fact planted as a harvestable crop about 80 years ago.

Unfortunately the red pines are susceptible to pests and pathogens, notably the red pine scale insect (*Matsucoccus reinosae*) and *Diplodia* fungus which attack and kill the trees within 2-4 years. The red pine stands in our sanctuary have not been immune to these blights, which have decimated red pine stands throughout the Pioneer valley, and over the past two years our trees have experienced a very high mortality rate. Due to the danger these dead and dying trees pose to the many of us who use the groves for recreation and exercise, the College is undertaking a phased project of red pine removal and reforestation.

The first phase of tree removal is scheduled to begin in early March and will address the six acre stand of trees in the worst condition, specifically the area just south and slightly east of the tennis courts and new student parking area. Other stands will be dealt with over the course of the next 2 years. Later this spring, after the trees have been removed, a mix of native deciduous and coniferous saplings will be planted and will begin the long process of growing to maturity. Unfortunately, these areas may look barren for a few years until the trees grow beyond the sapling stage.

For anyone interested in more information, representatives of the Facilities Department and our conservation and forestry consultant will be on hand to meet just outside the tennis barn next Tuesday 2/24 at 12 noon.

Thank you,

Jim Brassord

Chief of Campus Operations

NEW START FOR DYING RED PINE STANDS AT AMHERST COLLEGE



The College has begun a several-year project that will result in the replacement of about 35 acres of red pines with a mix of native trees and shrubs.

Red pines are not native to this part of the country but were planted at the College and many other New England sites in the



late 1930's following the Great New England Hurricane. After nearly 80 years of growth their growth has stagnated and they are now highly susceptible to disease and insect attack. Consequently, they now face a triple threat – a root rot, a red pine blight, and a new insect arrival, the Red Pine Scale. They are beginning to die in large numbers, presenting an unsightly safety hazard to those on campus. Trees that do appear healthy are expected to succumb to these problems within only a few years.

The College's plan, beginning with the red pines near the tennis courts, is to harvest and chip the pines and then to plant hundreds of native trees. The new trees will start as 4-foot tall "whips" that will eventually fill the growing space. The new species will include red and white oak, sugar maple, shagbark hickory, tuliptree, American beech, white pine, and white cedar. Instead of plantation-like rows of doomed, non-native trees, the new tree mix will be more reflective of a natural forest.

To accomplish the project, the College Facilities Department has worked closely with the biology and environmental studies faculty, the Sanctuary Stewardship Committee, and consultant conservation and forestry experts.



Ortho Photos from
Mass GIS 2009

Amherst College Red Pine Stands

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Feet

Conservation Works, LLC
November 2013



Project Overseen by:
Amherst College Sanctuary Committee
Supervising Contractor – Conservation Works, LLC
Consultant Forester – Lincoln Fish, Bay State Forestry Services

For more information: College Facilities Service Center,
542-2254