

Contact: Rob Moir at 978 621-6657 Rob@oceanriver.org Date: March 5, 2020

Executive Director, Ocean River Institute www.oceanriver.org



The Blue Sky Over Massachusetts Challenge

The Ocean River Institute will award three prizes: \$1,000 First Place, \$500 Second Place, and \$250 Third Place to town Climate Action Teams with the highest percentage of homeowners pledging NOT to use quick-release fertilizer on established lawns.

With the Massachusetts Senate approving "net zero" carbon emissions limit for the year 2050 in January, it is time to step up capturing more carbon with photosynthesis and sequestering more carbon in healthier soils, microbes, and plants.

We are inviting citizens of all Massachusetts towns to take part in our challenge.

Pledge to restore healthy soils and lawns that are capturing more carbon out of the atmosphere.

Hear what other Climate Change Activists are saying about the Challenge.

"One of the ways the Governor and state legislature can achieve their worthy goals of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 is capturing and sequestering carbon in healthy lawns, both at home and in our public and private golf courses using non-quick release fertilizers."

Jack Clarke

Director of Public Policy & Government Relations

Mass Audubon www.massaudubon.org

"Increasing carbon storage in soils is one of the most effective ways to take carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere. Grasses with strong, deep root systems put carbon back into the soil as organic matter, require little to no watering and are far more resilient in droughts, and can out-compete weeds more successfully. While established lawns rarely need fertilizer, when they do, using a slow-release fertilizer or compost once per year will reduce nutrient run-off and pollution of our waterways. This is a simple and cost-effective action people can take to make a difference!"

Alison Field-Juma, Executive Director
OARS: For the Assabet, Sudbury, and Concord Rivers www.oars3rivers.org

"Nitrogen has disrupted more ecosystems than any other chemical. The Blue Sky Over Massachusetts Challenge makes clear why we must and we can stop nitrogen pollution!"

Frances Moore Lappé
Acclaimed author of Diet for a Small Planet
Co-founder of Small Planet Institute www.smallplanet.org

"Nutrient pollution is a serious problem for rivers and streams throughout Massachusetts, and lawn fertilizer is a significant source of that pollution. We applaud the Ocean River Institute taking a creative, hands-on approach to this problem, and look forward to the success of this project."

Julia Blatt
Executive Director
Massachusetts Rivers Alliance www.massriversalliance.org

"What we put on our lawns gets into our environment and lawn chemicals are a major source of nutrient pollution in the Charles River. Nutrient pollution leads to overgrowth of invasive species, algae and cyanobacteria blooms, fish kills, and an abundance of unsightly foam in the river. The Ocean River Institute's campaign to promote healthy, natural lawns that are free from fertilizers will help improve water quality in the Charles."

Heather Miller, Esq.
General Counsel & Policy Director
Charles River Watershed Association www.crwa.org

"After degrading the soil with excessive harmful chemical practices, regenerating lawn ecosystem's natural function to good health is critical and restores nature's capacity to draw carbon from the atmosphere."

Mothers Out Front, Cambridge <https://ma.mothersoutfront.org/cambridge>

"Use of slow-release fertilizers instead of quick-release not only saves money and decreases pollution by stopping the use of chemicals, it creates healthier lawns with more foliage to better protect homes during extreme weather events and allows the grass to capture more carbon."

Massachusetts Sierra Club <https://www.sierraclub.org/massachusetts>