

§1106-A. Valuation of open space land

1. Valuation method. For the purposes of this subchapter, the current use value of open space land is the sale price that particular open space parcel would command in the marketplace if it were required to remain in the particular category or categories of open space land for which it qualifies under section 1102, subsection 6, adjusted by the certified ratio.

[PL 1993, c. 452, §9 (NEW).]

2. Alternative valuation method. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, if an assessor is unable to determine the valuation of open space land under the valuation method in subsection 1, the assessor may value that land under the alternative method in this subsection. The assessor may reduce the ordinary assessed valuation of the land, without regard to conservation easement restrictions and as reduced by the certified ratio, by the cumulative percentage reduction for which the land is eligible according to the following categories.

A. All open space land is eligible for a reduction of 20%. [PL 1993, c. 452, §9 (NEW).]

B. Permanently protected open space land is eligible for the reduction set in paragraph A and an additional 30%. [PL 1993, c. 452, §9 (NEW).]

C. Forever wild open space land is eligible for the reduction set in paragraphs A and B and an additional 20%. [PL 1993, c. 452, §9 (NEW).]

D. Public access open space land is eligible for the applicable reduction set in paragraph A, B or C and an additional 25%. [PL 1993, c. 452, §9 (NEW).]

E. Managed forest open space land is eligible for the reduction set in paragraphs A, B and D and an additional 10%. [PL 2011, c. 618, §6 (NEW).]

Notwithstanding this section, the value of forested open space land may not be reduced to less than the value it would have under subchapter 2-A, and the open space land valuation may not exceed just value as required under section 701-A.

[PL 2017, c. 288, Pt. A, §43 (AMD).]

3. Definition of land eligible for additional percentage reduction. The following categories of open space land are eligible for the additional percentage reduction set forth in subsection 2, paragraphs B, C, D and E.

A. Permanently protected open space is an area of open space land that is eligible for an additional cumulative percentage reduction in valuation because that area is subject to restrictions prohibiting building development under a perpetual conservation easement pursuant to Title 33, chapter 7, subchapter 8-A or as an open space preserve owned and operated by a nonprofit entity in accordance with section 1109, subsection 3, paragraph H. [PL 2011, c. 618, §7 (AMD).]

B. Forever wild open space is an area of open space land that is eligible for an additional cumulative percentage reduction in valuation because it is permanently protected and subject to restrictions or committed to uses by a nonprofit entity in accordance with section 1109, subsection 3, paragraph H that ensure that in the future the natural resources on that protected property will remain substantially unaltered, except for:

- (1) Fishing or hunting;
- (2) Harvesting shellfish in the intertidal zone;
- (3) Prevention of the spread of fires or disease; or
- (4) Providing opportunities for low-impact outdoor recreation, nature observation and study.

[PL 1993, c. 452, §9 (NEW).]

C. Public access open space is an area of open space land, whether ordinary, permanently protected or forever wild, that is eligible for an additional cumulative percentage reduction in valuation because public access is by reasonable means and the applicant agrees to refrain from taking action to discourage or prohibit daytime, nonmotorized and nondestructive public use. The applicant may permit, but is not obligated to permit as a condition of qualification for public access status, hunting, snowmobiling, overnight use or other more intensive outdoor recreational uses. The applicant, without disqualifying land from status as public access open space, may impose temporary or localized public access restrictions to:

- (1) Protect active habitat of endangered species listed under Title 12, chapter 925, subchapter 3;
- (2) Prevent destruction or harm to fragile protected natural resources under Title 38, chapter 3, subchapter 1, article 5-A; or
- (3) Protect the recreational user from any hazardous area. [PL 2003, c. 414, Pt. B, §50 (AMD); PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF).]

D. Managed forest open space land is an area of open space land whether ordinary, permanently protected pursuant to paragraph A or public access pursuant to paragraph C containing at least 10 acres of forested land that is eligible for an additional cumulative percentage reduction in valuation because the applicant has provided proof of a forest management and harvest plan. A forest management and harvest plan must be prepared for each parcel of managed forest open space land and updated every 10 years. The landowner must comply with the forest management and harvest plan and must submit every 10 years to the municipal assessor for parcels in a municipality or the State Tax Assessor for parcels in the unorganized territory a statement from a licensed professional forester that the landowner is managing the parcel according to the forest management and harvest plan. Failure to comply with the forest management and harvest plan results in the loss of the additional cumulative percentage reduction under this paragraph for 10 years. The assessor or the assessor's duly authorized representative may enter and examine the forested land and may examine any information in the forest management and harvest plan submitted by the owner. A copy of the forest management and harvest plan must be made available to the assessor to review upon request. For the purposes of this paragraph, "to review" means to see or possess a copy of a forest management and harvest plan for a reasonable amount of time to verify that the forest management and harvest plan exists or to facilitate an evaluation as to whether the forest management and harvest plan is appropriate and is being followed. Upon completion of a review, the forest management and harvest plan must be returned to the owner or an agent of the owner. A forest management and harvest plan provided in accordance with this section is confidential and is not a public record as defined in Title 1, section 402, subsection 3. [PL 2011, c. 618, §7 (NEW).]

[PL 2011, c. 618, §7 (AMD).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1993, c. 452, §9 (NEW). PL 2003, c. 414, §B50 (AMD). PL 2003, c. 414, §D7 (AFF). PL 2003, c. 614, §9 (AFF). PL 2011, c. 618, §§6, 7 (AMD). PL 2017, c. 288, Pt. A, §43 (AMD).

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