

MBA NEWS

20 West Street, Boston, MA 02111-1204 • communications@massbar.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

April 22, 2009

CONTACT:

Jennifer Rosinski (617) 338-0675

Tricia M. Oliver (617) 338-0677

Earth Day celebrated with release of Lawyers Eco-Challenge Green Guidelines for Landscape Management

BOSTON, Mass. — In celebration of Earth Day, the Massachusetts Bar Association Lawyers Eco-Challenge has today released its latest Green Guidelines, this time with a focus on landscape management. The guidelines promote replacing traditional lawns with natural landscaping and native plants, or implementing measures to reduce pollution and improve soil health when caring for a traditional lawn.

The Green Guidelines, Landscape Management, are available online at www.massbar.org/ecochallenge. The guidelines will be broken down into two major categories, “go natural” and “thoughtful lawn care,” with the latter containing suggestions in the areas of mowing, watering, pollution, fertilizers, lighting and soil and planting. Among the tips are limiting lawn watering, preventing runoff, using home-made fertilizers and soil testing.

“The new Green Guidelines, Landscape Management, are a terrific tool for helping Eco-Challenge Partners take their energy, water and other resource conservation measures from their offices to the outdoors,” said Susan Reid, co-chair of the Energy and Environment Task Force and staff attorney at the Conservation Law Foundation, the MBA’s Eco-Challenge partner. “This is a new opportunity for participants to visibly lead by example in their communities as they embrace practical and environmentally sound landscape management principles and tools.”

Legal businesses of all sizes, from large firms to solo practitioners operating out of their homes will be able to use these guidelines to make positive changes toward greener landscaping practices. Legal practitioners can also implement the guidelines at their homes.

Statistics and government reports show the negative effects of traditional landscaping practices:

- Non-native plants cost the U.S. economy more than \$97 billion a year in lost crops and failed recovery efforts for endangered species, according to the New England Wild Flower Society.
- Excess synthetic fertilizers run off the land with harmful effects on drinking water supplies, recreation, fisheries and wildlife, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.
- The average lawn mower emits as much smog-forming pollution in one hour as eight new cars traveling at 55 miles per hour for one hour, reports The Union of Concerned Scientists.

The overuse of water is also a growing concern, said Nancy B. Reiner, co-chair of the Energy and Environment Task Force, which oversees the Eco-Challenge. “It is imperative that we take steps

toward becoming a more water neutral society to preserve this critical and scarce resource,” said Reiner, executive director of the Counsel on Call’s Boston office. “Many typical landscaping practices waste abundant amounts of water.”

Typical suburban houses use at least 30 percent of their water for outdoor lawn watering, according to the EPA. Some experts estimate that more than 50 percent of landscape water is wasted due to evaporation, wind and/or over-watering.

The new guidelines, which follow the release of office-specific guidelines last year, are just one part of the Eco-Challenge’s second year of initiatives. A cell phone recycling program in conjunction with Verizon Wireless’ HopeLine program (www.verizonwireless.com/hopeline) launched Feb. 2. Working and broken cell phones, batteries and accessories from all service providers are accepted at one of three collection boxes: MBA headquarters, 20 West St., Boston; MBA Western Mass. office, 73 State St., Springfield; and CLF’s Massachusetts headquarters, 62 Summer St., Boston.

The proceeds from New England cell phone collections are directed toward organizations that work to prevent domestic violence and assist survivors through purchasing and donating refurbished phones with airtime or paying for special projects.

The MBA launched the Eco-Challenge in September 2007. Nearly 100 firms, attorneys or organizations have signed the MBA Lawyers Environmental Pledge to join the Eco-Challenge. There are also Pledge Partners outside of traditional law firms and the state of Massachusetts.

For more information on the MBA Lawyers Eco-Challenge, visit www.massbar.org/ecochallenge.

Incorporated in 1911, the Massachusetts Bar Association is a non-profit organization that serves the legal profession and the public by promoting the administration of justice, legal education, professional excellence and respect for the law. The MBA represents a diverse group of attorneys, judges and legal professionals across the commonwealth.

The Conservation Law Foundation works to solve the most significant environmental challenges facing New England. CLF’s advocates use law, economics and science to create innovative strategies to conserve natural resources, protect public health and promote vital communities in our region. Founded, in 1966, CLF is a non-profit, member-supported organization with offices in Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont.