Eighteen landowners in Western Massachusetts began meeting informally in 1999 to discuss the possibility of forming a forest cooperative. By the fall of 2001, the cooperative had been incorporated as the Massachusetts Woodlands Cooperative, LLC.

The mission of the Cooperative is to maintain the environment and character of Western Massachusetts through the protection, enhancement, and careful economic development of one of the region’s most plentiful resources, the forest.

The Cooperative has expanded to 48 members who collectively manage 8,000 acres. Eligibility for membership includes landowners with a minimum of 10 acres, who either have or are willing to develop a forest management plan that meets Forest Stewardship Council certification standards.

The Cooperative maintains a database with detailed information on forest material that is available for harvesting from members. The database also tracks forest materials as they are transformed into value-added products and organizes information needed for the Cooperative to function as a business (cost of goods purchased, inventory, sales, marketing, etc.). The database is linked with the Cooperative’s website.

Through collaboration with a local non-profit interested in improving the region’s forests through removal of low-grade material and increasing landowner cooperation, the Cooperative members have an opportunity to use a firewood processor and provide feedback about their experience. The processor handles between one and one-and-a-half cords per hour.

The principal marketing activities of the Cooperative include:

- The marketing of individual members’ green-certified firewood on the Cooperative’s website, www.masswoodlands.coop;
- The marketing of branded lumber products (HomeGrown Wood) on the Cooperative’s website including: rough-sawn and kiln dried lumber; and,
- Connection with local forest-based businesses owned by Cooperative members.