

A Special Thanks to Paul G. Beaulieu

Paul Beaulieu recently stepped down as the chair of The Kestrel Trust after more than 10 years of devoted service. We are grateful for the many years he has given to lead and build the organization, and we are relieved that he has agreed to remain an active board member.

Paul, a resident of Granby, brought to Kestrel a serious concern for land conservation, an even and steady style of leadership, and years of expertise in environmental resource management and land use planning. In addition to the hundreds of hours he volunteered to shape Kestrel into an effective regional land trust, Paul has devoted his professional life to conservation as well. He is a senior manager at Tighe and Bond, a leading environmental engineering firm in Massachusetts. But his real passion is fishing, which you will find him doing during any spare moment he can find.



Thank you, Paul!

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Founded in 1970, The Kestrel Trust is a 501(c)(3) non-profit land trust dedicated to the conservation of forests, farms, fields, and wetlands in the Pioneer Valley of western Massachusetts, from the Mount Holyoke Range to Mt. Toby, and from the Connecticut River to the Quabbin Reservoir.

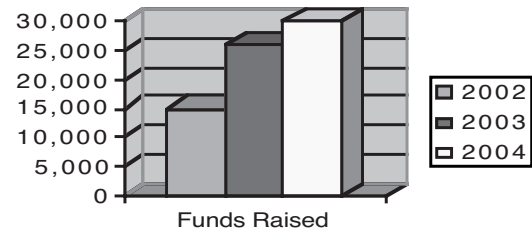
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Thank You for Contributing to KT's '04 Annual Fund Drive!



Thanks to you, The Kestrel Trust reached our goal of raising \$30,000 for the 2004 annual fund drive! We greatly appreciate your support. This funding will be used to initiate local land conservation projects, leverage public funding for land acquisition, and run our lean organization.

We are also pleased to report that Kestrel members have given more and more and more to support regional conservation over the years—up from \$15,000 in 2002 to \$26,000 in 2003, and \$30,000 in 2004. We couldn't do it without you!

If you haven't had a chance to give back to the land recently, we always welcome your contributions. Donations to The Kestrel Trust are tax-deductible. Thank you.

___\$50 ___\$100 ___\$250 other ___

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

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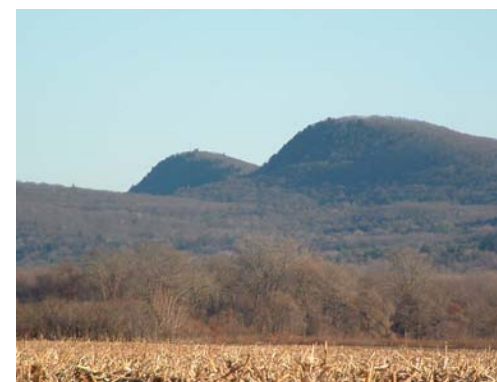
Valley Views

The newsletter of
The Kestrel Trust
Fall 2004



Focusing on the Range

—Kestrel Organizes a Community Photo Exhibit



Mt. Holyoke Range by Brian Oleberg.

The Kestrel Trust is pleased to announce that we have received more than 500 images for *Focusing on the Range: A Community Photo Exhibit*, which will be on display at the Summit House in Hadley from May 22-August 28, 2005. Residents from Chicopee to Sunderland submitted images of the Mount Holyoke and Mount Tom Ranges from vantage points throughout the Pioneer Valley. It is amazing where the mountains can be found once you start looking!

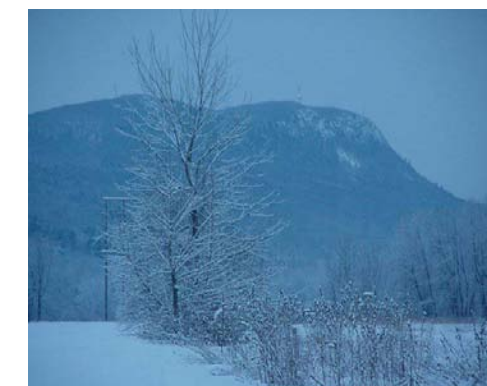
The idea behind this photo exhibit was to encourage people to share what these mountains mean to them. All together, the photos, which include framed, scrapbook, and digital images, make an inspiring statement about the value of this natural landmark to the people of this Valley.

Kestrel hopes the exhibit will raise public awareness about the need to conserve the viewsheds from, of, and on the Range. Only about 50% of the Range is permanently protected from development. In order to maintain the ecological, historic, and scenic integrity of this area, it is critical that land trusts, landowners, towns, and state agencies work together to strategically conserve critical areas on the slopes as well as in the Valley below.

WGBY, public television for western New England, also played a principal role in the project. With funding provided by PeoplesBank, they created a video documentary featuring some of the entries, original footage, and interviews with naturalists, historians, and local Range aficionados. Thousands of people tuned in during March to see the documentary. If you missed it, you can purchase a DVD or VHS of the documentary at the Summit House or through kestreltrust.org beginning in May.

Please visit the exhibit this spring, and cast your vote for your favorite entry. Enjoy!

To make *Focusing on the Range* possible, Kestrel worked with several other area conservation groups in the Valley, including the Connecticut Valley Summit, The Trustees of Reservations, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, Friends of Mount Holyoke Range, Connecticut River Watershed Council, and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. Major sponsorship support was provided by PeoplesBank and several small businesses in the area, including Amherst Environmental Laboratory, Coldham Architects, Connecticut River Watershed Council, Fly Me A River Guide Service, Holyoke Gas & Electric Department, Jekanowski and O'Neil, Mercy Medical Intensive Care, Northampton Brewery, Seewald, Jankowski, and Spencer P.C., Iris Photo, Collective Copies, The Toybox, Valley Quarterly, Zana, and other anonymous donors. Thank you to everyone!



Mt. Tom by Laura Tisley.

Inside:

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Progress in the Great Meadow of Hadley

The Kestrel Trust is making steady progress to protect The Great Meadow of Hadley—a 350+ acre agricultural area that lies between West Street and the Connecticut River. The Great Meadow is the place where Hadley got its start in farming. The long slender fields, originally designed to be plowed by oxen, were laid out in 1661 and allotted to the first colonial settlers of the town. The Meadow was an integral part of the town layout, which also included tightly clustered village housing along the common on West Street and the town burial grounds on Cemetery Road. As such, the Great Meadow is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as part of Hadley's historic town center.

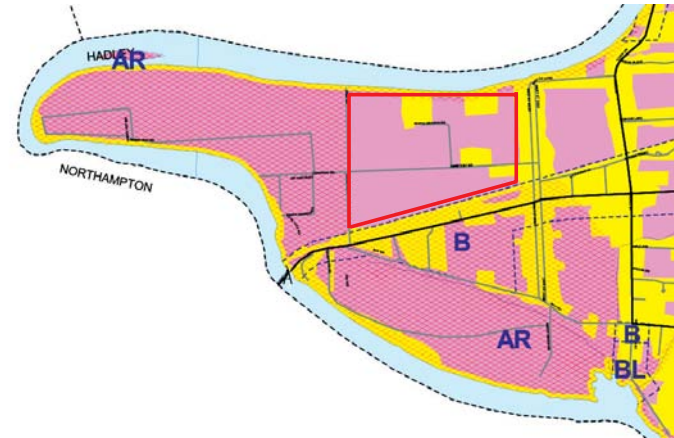
Despite The Great Meadow's value to colonial history and to agriculture in the Commonwealth, the area remains vulnerable to housing development. Reflecting historic land use patterns, there are approximately 35 long and narrow parcels in the Great Meadow, which are owned by separate individuals or families. Kestrel's goal is to protect farming the Great Meadow, while maintaining as far as possible this unique and historic ownership pattern. Toward this end we have done the following:

- ∞ **Willing Landowners:** Identified landowners who are willing to protect their land for farming, either by selling or donating agricultural preservation restrictions (APR) or by selling The Kestrel Trust an option to purchase the land for agricultural conservation purposes in the future.
- ∞ **Historic Importance:** Won recognition for historic importance of the land from PreservatiON Mass, a statewide historic preservation organization, which named the Great Meadow as one of the "10 Most Endangered Historic Resources" in the winter of 2004. Gained the support of the Hadley Historic Commission and Hadley Historic Society for the effort.
- ∞ **Public Awareness:** Began to do a series of presentations around the area explaining the effort. Upcoming presentations are scheduled for May 3 at 7pm by the Hadley Neighborhood Association and on May 11 at 7:30pm by the Hadley Historical Society.
- ∞ **Public Funding:** Identified public sources of funding to purchase APRs. So far the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources has agreed to fund the acquisition of an APR on 3 adjacent lots, totaling 10.6 acres. So far, the Town of Hadley has contributed \$10,000 toward APR protection and may consider appropriating additional funding from the new Community Preservation Act Fund. This June, Kestrel will apply to the Massachusetts Historical Commission for the historic preservation projects grant program.
- ∞ **Private Fundraising:** Raised about \$50,000 in seed funding for the project from Kestrel members and foundations which will be used to purchase options from landowners, help meet local match requirements for state funding, as well as pay for real estate appraisals and other transaction costs. Our goal is to raise \$100,000 by the end of 2005.



The Great Meadow from the air by Pete Westover.

The Great Meadow



The Great Meadow lays between West Street and the River. The area outlined in red is at greatest risk from development. (Yellow indicates existing development.). Map by MassGIS.

To support this unique project for the sake of history and the future of agriculture in the Valley, you can write a check to The Kestrel Trust/Great Meadow Project or contact us to get more involved. Thank you!

Join us Saturday May 14, 8-9:30am, for a Trip to the Great Meadow

Ecologist and birder David King will lead a field trip in honor of Migratory Bird Day. Meet at the north end of West Street in Hadley at the parking area for the dike. The easy walk will include spectacular views of The Great Meadow, The Range, and the River—and hopefully plenty of migrating birds too! Bring binoculars.

Belchertown Conservation Area—Coming this Summer!

Between the Mount Holyoke Range and Quabbin Reservoir lies 51.5 acres of scenic forest and open fields. The land, known as the Topping Farm, is planned to be sold to the Town of Belchertown and protected as a public conservation area this summer. More than \$325,000 has been raised for this project from the state, town, private residents, land trusts, and foundations. But that leaves about \$60,000 more that must still be secured to provide adequate funding for the project.

The goals for this project are to protect our vital drinking water supplies, conserve a critical wildlife habitat corridor, and maintain public access for recreation. This property is a major recharge area for the aquifer that underlies Lawrence Swamp and serves as a public water source for Belchertown and Amherst. The property is also located between the Quabbin and the Range, which both provide important core habitat for local wildlife. This property would help provide natural connections for species that roam between these two reserves. Finally, the purchase of this section of the Topping Farm would maintain public access to the popular Robert Frost/Metacomet-Monadnock Trails.

The Kestrel Trust contributed \$5,600 toward this project from our annual appeal funds, and we have been assisting the Belchertown Conservation Commission with private fundraising efforts for this important property. We are grateful to the Kestrel supporters who have already generously contributed to this project, and anticipate that several foundations will grant \$10,000 to \$20,000 this spring. That leaves about \$20,000 that we hope to generate from area residents. That equals just 20 people who can give \$1,000. Can you or anyone you know make that investment in the future of water, wildlife and recreation in the Valley?

To support this project, checks may be made out to The Kestrel Trust/Topping Farm Project. Thank you!



Nearby conservation land along the M&M trail, protected by KT in 2001.

Kestrel Receives A Generous Bequest!

The Kestrel Trust recently received a great surprise! A generous bequest of \$185,000 from Clarice Brows Thorp—a prominent and devoted citizen of the town of Pelham. The gift benefits Kestrel's work around the region, and specifically sets aside a portion for use in Pelham.

Mrs. Thorp was known in town as a feisty and outspoken advocate for education and good citizenship. Above all she valued the power of education to help people understand and improve the world around them. And as an attorney, she believed in people's legal right to clean air, clean water and a healthy environment. Honoring The Kestrel Trust in her will was perhaps her way of showing that education, the law and conservation go hand in hand. By protecting the land, we not only conserve the vital ecological systems all life depends upon, we help protect the land for future generations to discover and enjoy by using legal means to work with landowners to protect the resources needed to enhance common good.

Clarice and Willard Thorp were a devoted couple for over forty years—a partnership that made visible their affection for each other and their shared values about taking strong stands and making government work. She was extraordinarily proud of her husband's achievements as a professor of Economics at Amherst College and as one of the chief architects of the Marshall Plan under the Roosevelt Administration. She was equally and justly proud of her own accomplishments and public work.

In addition to The Kestrel Trust, Mrs. Thorp named the Pelham Library, Amherst College, Cooley Dickinson Hospital and many other prominent charitable organizations in the Pioneer Valley.

Kestrel is extremely grateful for this gift. We plan to use the funds to advance direct land acquisition projects and to help build the organization to keep up with the pace of conservation so necessary to protect quality of life in our Valley.

Conservation Tax-Incentives Under Attack

On January 27, 2005, a report released by the Congressional Joint Committee on Taxation shocked the land trust community by proposing major decreases in the federal tax deductions for conservation easements and bargain sales. The proposal, if adopted, would end the work of land trusts as we know it.

The Land Trust Alliance (LTA), of which The Kestrel Trust is a member, is engaged in a vigorous response, working with a coalition of national conservation leaders and allies. But to succeed, we need the help of every friend and member of the Trust.

The New Tax Proposals: The Joint Committee has proposed that deductions for conservation easements be limited to 33% of appraised value. No deduction will be allowed for the donation of an easement on land used for a personal residence.

The Committee also proposes changing the deductions associated with donations or bargain sales of land by limiting such donations to the owner's "basis"—that is, the cost of the land plus any capital improvements made over the years.

The Impact on Land Trusts: If enacted, these proposals would severely set back our conservation work. Saving land is often the primary motivation for donating a conservation easement, but we know that tax deductions enable many more people to donate or effect a bargain sale.

How You Can Help: You must act today, because our organization depends upon the tax incentives the Joint Committee on taxation has attacked. Letters to our US Senators and Representative asking them to help in fighting these proposals are essential. Our local opinion does count.

Please help us turn back these harmful changes in tax law and instead maintain momentum on positive reforms for land trusts.

For more information see <http://www.lta.org/publicpolicy/ppc.htm>. Article provided by the Land Trust Alliance.