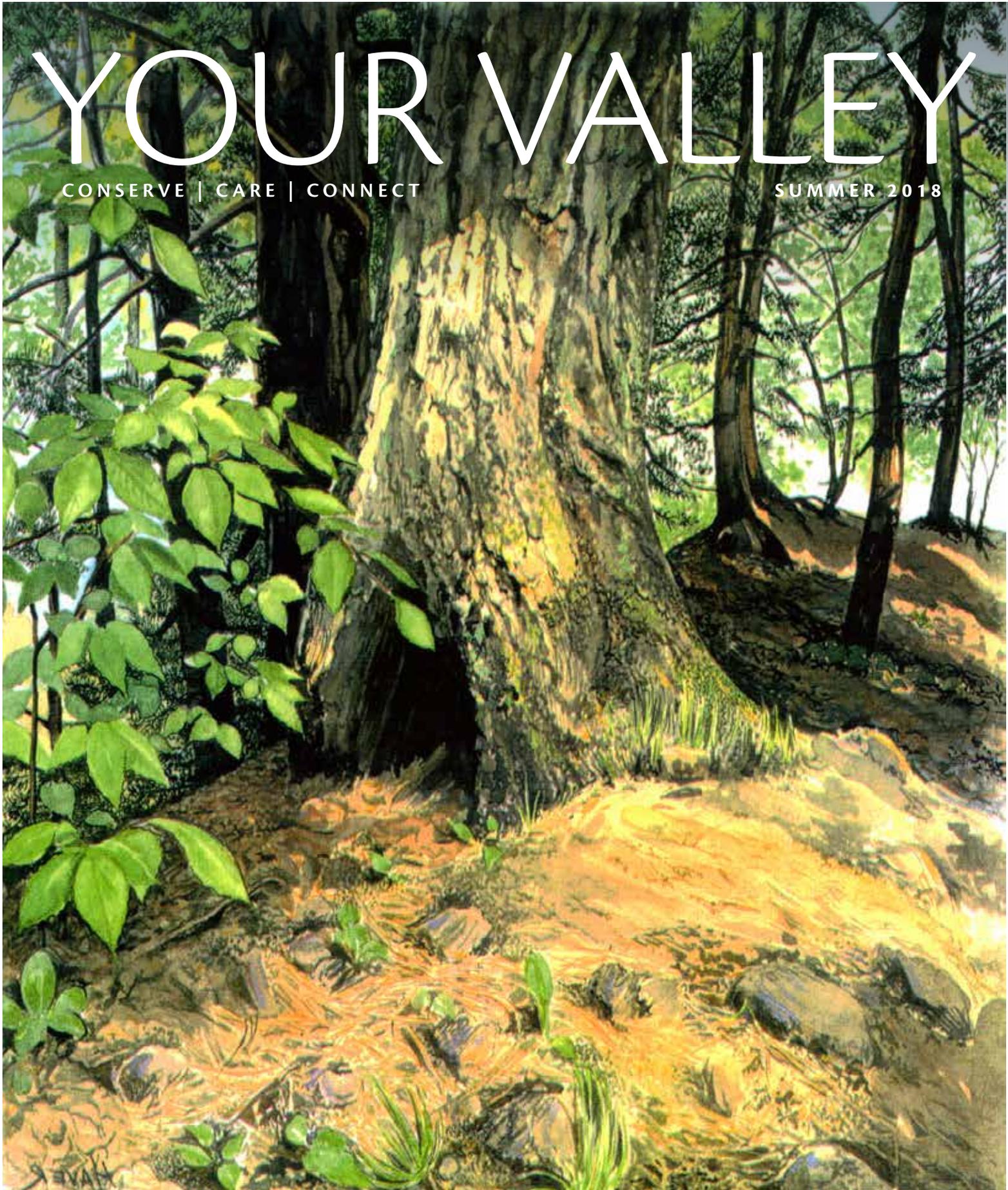


YOUR VALLEY

CONSERVE | CARE | CONNECT

SUMMER 2018



**KESTREL
LAND TRUST**

*WHAT'S INSIDE: Preserving Forever-Wild Forests
New Town Woodland Honors Forestry Professor
Kids & Teens Find a Place for Themselves in Nature*



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Welcome to the Team!

CONSERVING AND CARING FOR THE VALLEY AND CONNECTING PEOPLE TO the land takes many hands and many talents. We are excited to welcome **two new staff members** and **two new Board Trustees** to the Kestrel Land Trust team.

Paul Gagnon, Conservation & Stewardship Manager: Paul came to Kestrel after seven years working as a conservation restriction specialist for the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests. Paul's background includes sustainable trail design and landscape-scale planning for recreation, with a master's degree from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. In this new staff position, Paul will be leading land conservation projects as well as some stewardship activities.

Marilyn Castriotta, Membership Coordinator: Marilyn just completed a year of TerraCorps service creating inspiring nature and culture programs with Kestrel. In her new role, she will coordinate membership services, including fundraising and events planning. Previously, she worked as a park interpreter with the MA Department of Conservation & Recreation and a program coordinator for Northeast Organic Farming Association. She has a masters degree from Antioch University NE.

Sanford "Sandy" Belden, Board Trustee: Sandy is a retired CEO of a regional bank in New York. He has served on the boards of the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts, Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity, and Smith College. He is currently the vice chair of the boards of Cooley Dickinson Hospital and The Center for Eco-Technology. He lives across from his conserved 12-generation family farm.

Sarah Matthews, Board Trustee: Sarah is an experienced corporate and commercial real estate attorney with Klavens Law Group, P.C. This mission-oriented law firm based in Boston, MA focuses on renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and food ventures, impact investment, and social enterprise.

FROM THE HEART OF THE VALLEY

Reprieve by Janine Roberts

*After the bald year of tumors,
 I stand at the birch, walk
 fingertips up its chalk-white bark,
 cross over delicate brown lines
 like marks on old papyrus –
 way points I learn
 to stretch my reach.*

*I rest my cheek on curves
 soft as my young daughter's,
 gaze beyond the tree's shelter
 across the spare sky,
 then grab and tear off bark
 curlicues that festoon the tree,
 twine them into my baby tufts of hair.*



From *"The Body Alters"* (Slate Roof Press). Janine Roberts lives in Leverett, and is a family therapist, author and Professor Emerita at UMass Amherst.

Janine co-created the Leverett Trails Poetry Project—where visitors can share poems in poetry boxes along the trails—with Rattlesnake Gutter Trust and Leverett Conservation Commission.

Holyoke Teens Reflect on What They Learned From the Forest

*"I like the outdoors more than I thought."
 -John, age 17*

*"I did things I never thought I was going to do."
 -Sergio, age 17*

*"I learned how millions of things
 are happening at the same time in nature
 and how beneficial it is to us."
 -Jorge, age 16*

*"I can be more myself away from home
 and my phone."
 -Kimberly, age 18*

*"I learned nature can make you feel at home
 or give you things that you need—
 not necessarily physical things."
 -Coralys, age 18*



CONNECT

Dean Tech High School students camped out at Eagle Eye Institute's forest. Kestrel's TerraCorps member Jill Fusco taught them about trees.

IN MAY AND JUNE, STUDENTS FROM DEAN TECH HIGH SCHOOL in Holyoke ventured to the Berkshires for a 3-day camp-out program with Kestrel's partner, Eagle Eye Institute. The trips offered a chance for these urban young people to learn about, make connections with, and be inspired to protect the natural environment.

As the students learned camping skills, they also heard about birds and trees from Kestrel TerraCorps members. By the end of the trip, they became more comfortable in nature and challenged themselves with new experiences.

Nature Is There for Bigs & Littles Alike

By Marilyn Castriotta, TerraCorps Community Engagement Coordinator

"INHERENT IN EVERY CHILD IS THE ability to succeed and thrive in life." This belief is at the heart of the nonprofit Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) of Hampshire County. One of the most meaningful experiences of my year of service at Kestrel has been partnering with BBBS, which provides supportive one-to-one relationships with volunteer mentors to children facing difficulties at home.

The youth served by BBBS often don't have easy access to nature. To help connect "Littles" (children ages 6-18) and their "Bigs" (adult volunteers) to the land, I organized nature walks at local conservation areas. The first, a winter solstice mindfulness walk, was at the Silvio Conte Refuge's accessible Fort River Trail at night. Littles and Bigs

enjoyed "being outside in the dark and seeing the stars," "seeing everything by moonlight," and "walking with friends, stars, moon."

A nature walk in May at the Fort River Trail enabled us to observe seasonal changes at the same place. Jen Lapis, of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, provided a guided tour. The Littles enjoyed getting a close look at tiny creatures in the river and were thrilled to see turtles on a log. One child delighted that "this refuge is right here in Hadley!"

In June, the children took a nature walk at the Orchard Arboretum Conservation Area, then got creative at a nature-themed art class at the Eric Carle Museum. Several seniors from the Applewood Retirement Community joined in, bringing multiple generations together.

All of these events helped Littles and Bigs connect to nature but also did something more: They helped both adults and children realize that conservation areas exist and are accessible to everyone, including them.



A "Big Sister" and "Little Sister" enjoying Orchard Aboretum together in Amherst.



WOODLANDS

New "Mader Town Forest" Honors Forestry Professor

PHOTO: CHARLEY EISEMAN

Donald Mader was only in junior high school when he discovered what would become his life-long passion. He had just won a copy of the book *The Young Forester*, by Zane Gray. After reading it, he decided to dedicate his life to the forest. He would soon come to study it as a scientist, teach about it as Professor of Forestry at UMass Amherst, and love it deeply as the caretaker, with his family, of his own forestland.

In the 1960s, Don was able to buy two woodlots in Belchertown. The rolling terrain held stands of oak, white pine, maple, and hemlock. His family said, "This 'Belchertown woodlot' became his playground as well as a place to practice the forest management skills he believed in. He bound his heart to this piece of land, to feel its peacefulness, while he nurtured its growth."

Don's wife and children also bonded with this forested land. They loved the vernal pools, rock formations and hill ledges scattered throughout the forest. In the 1970s, his son Jim even spent time on the hilltop living in a tipi he built.

Don passed away in 1987. But thanks to his wife Mary and their children, the family's forest has now become the new 86-acre Mader Town Forest. "He would be so glad to know this land is being pre-

served, that others will feel this forest floor beneath their feet or climb the hill to feel the sun filter through leaves as it had on his wife and children's faces," wrote Mary and her daughter Sue Aldridge.

A Woodland for All

The Mader Town Forest is now owned by Belchertown, with a conservation restriction held by Kestrel Land Trust. With its steep hillside and scenic vistas, the land is already a popular place for hiking, horseback riding, skiing, and hunting. The forest is also in a recharge area for Jabish Brook—an important drinking water supply for Belchertown and the City of Springfield.

This new town forest will continue to provide critical wildlife habitat connecting larger forest blocks of Mt. Holyoke Range State Park and the Quabbin Reservoir. Since 2005, Kestrel and the Town have joined together with landowners to protect over 1,000 acres in this area, including the nearby Holland Glen, Wentworth Farm, Scarborough Brook, and Topping Farm Conservation Areas. "Don would be so pleased to know that the preservation of this land

also protects a natural wildlife corridor," wrote Mary.

As Don Mader had done as a forester, and his son Russ after him, the town will manage this forest with science-based sustainable forestry practices—selective harvesting of local wood using methods that protect water resources and wildlife habitat to ensure that the forest remains resilient as the climate changes.

Wildlands & Woodlands: A Forest Vision

New England forests are at a turning point: They are disappearing at a rate of 65 acres per day. Public funding and the rate of conservation have dropped as well.

The Wildlands and Woodlands (W&W) vision developed by scientists at Harvard Forest and other partners calls for a 50-year effort to permanently conserve 70 percent of New England as forest, plus at least 7 percent as farmland. W&W recommends that 90 percent of the total forest conserved be as woodlands, sustainably managed for timber harvesting and other values, and 10 percent conserved as wildlands to protect biodiversity and wilderness.

Achieving the W&W vision will require a tripling of current rates of land conservation. This can only happen through the commitment of thousands of willing landowners who care about securing the future of their land. It will require innovative approaches and diverse partnerships of economic, environmental, and community interests.

Kestrel Land Trust is committed to working with landowners who want to voluntarily conserve their forests, either as wildlands or as woodlands.

Excerpted from "Wildlands & Woodlands: A Vision for the New England Landscape." Learn more at wildlandsandwoodlands.org.

WILDLANDS

Old-Growth Forests Have Their Champions

Imagine stepping back into New England 400 years ago. The landscape is dense with trees of all sizes—some of them are giants. There's a lush, green

understory of ferns, wildflowers, and mosses sprouting from a thick, spongy layer of duff on the forest floor. This rich structure is the old-growth forest that coexisted with native peoples.

In the 1700s, European settlers moved in and most ancient forests were soon lost to their axes, one tree at a time. Much of New England was transformed from old-growth forest to open pasture. As farmers moved westward in the 1800s, the forests grew back, but eventually many were cut a second time.

Generations later a Southerner with a love of documenting big trees began exploring Massachusetts. In the 1980s, Bob Leverett was hunting for large white pines when he started seeing areas that differed from typical New England forests.

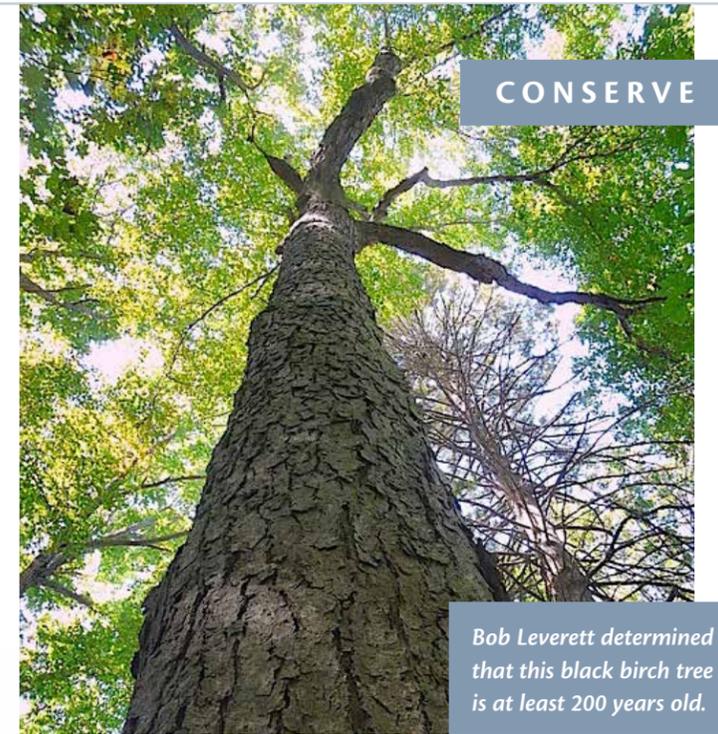
"What I was seeing were physical characteristics that looked like the Smoky Mountains region where I grew up," Bob recalled. Old-growth forests are much more common there, and Bob thought he had seen a number of sites like this in New England. "I realized then that we probably had small patches of bona-fide old-growth forests here."

Researchers, including Bob, have now found that less than 1/10 of one percent of all forests in the state are in fact old-growth. Recent studies also suggest that the largest trees provide critical benefits that smaller trees don't, including stabilizing the surrounding ecosystem and storing large amounts of carbon. This is an area of research that is only now coming to fruition.

A Fund for Conserving Forests as Forever-Wild

For the past 35 years, Bob (and more recently with his wife Monica Jakuc Leverett) has championed the benefits of old-growth and mature forests. These benefits include "supporting the complex web of life, carbon sequestration, water quality, and the restoration of the human spirit." For this reason, the Leveretts have made a generous commitment to help Kestrel Land Trust conserve forested wildlands in the Pioneer Valley.

"We have established the Monica and Bob Leverett Forever-Wild Conservation Fund at Kestrel Land Trust to encourage the preservation of our mature forests to continue their benefits into



Bob Leverett determined that this black birch tree is at least 200 years old.

the future." With a gift of \$10,000 to Kestrel in 2018 and a bequest planned for the future, this new fund is dedicated exclusively to conserving forests as "forever-wild, leaving the woods alone to develop as nature so masterfully designed them to do," they explained. Management of these forests will be permitted only to remove invasive species, control insects or pathogens, and create hiking trails. "Our goal is to preserve wildlands that are on their way to

"We have created a 'Forever-Wild Fund' at Kestrel to encourage preservation of our mature forests into the future."

— MONICA & BOB LEVERETT

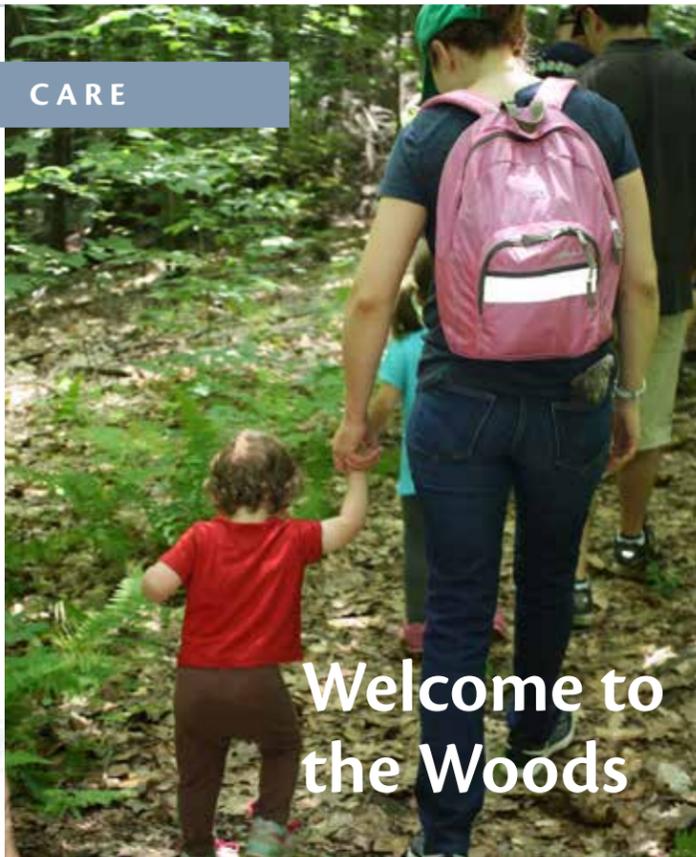
late-successional status in order to maximize their advanced rates of carbon sequestration and mitigate climate change." The Fund will also support Kestrel's creation of education materials and programs to build awareness about the benefits of "forever-wild" conservation options for landowners.

"As residents of the Connecticut River Valley for decades, we want to pass on a legacy of stately, inspiring forests," the Leveretts said. "We hope that others will join us in this mission."



Bob Leverett is the co-founder of the Native Tree Society, President of Friends of Mohawk Trail State Forest, and chairperson for the MA Dept. of Conservation & Recreation Forest Reserves Scientific Advisory Committee.

Monica Jakuc Leverett is a pianist and Elsie Irwin Sweeney Professor Emerita of Music at Smith College, where she taught from 1969 until 2008.



Welcome to the Woods

When we conserve woods and fields, providing a way for the public to visit and enjoy these conserved lands is often one of the goals. Kestrel's stewardship team is continually looking for ways to improve your experience on conservation areas we own or manage. This summer, we are beginning work at two special places: Well-Away Farm in Pelham, and Kestrel's Greenberg Family Conservation Area in Westhampton.

Well-Away Farm

The Keyes family conserved 66 acres of fields, woodlands, and wetlands with Kestrel and the town of Pelham in 2009. The family owns the permanently conserved Well-Away Farm land, and welcomes the public to walk the trail from South Valley Road.



In May, students in the carpentry program at Dean Technical High School in Holyoke trekked out to the Greenberg Family Conservation Area to deliver benches they designed and built in class.

The students hiked into the woods carrying the well-constructed wooden benches to a forest clearing we call "the gathering circle." Afterwards, they explored the stream and met some wildlife.



Recently, the family and the Pearl L. Keyes Memorial Scholarship Fund made a generous donation of \$7,000 over three years to enable Kestrel to improve visitors' experiences at the property.

Work started this summer on several trail enhancements that will improve access through the property's open meadows and add interest to the walk. This includes rerouting a portion of the trail, improving stream crossings, and installing a memorial bench on the top of the ridge, rewarding hikers with a lovely view.

"Both my father-in-law, Edmund, and my brother-in-law, Pearl, thoroughly enjoyed the Well-Away Farm where they grew up and spent countless hours working the land," said Karol Jamrok, Trustee of the Pearl L. Keyes Memorial Scholarship Fund. "I can't think of a better way to honor their hard work and memory of this beautiful parcel than with this donation."

These improvements will also help make Well-Away Farm a welcoming entry point for a public trail network that winds through more than 400 acres of conserved land managed by the Town of Pelham and Kestrel Land Trust, all the way to the Butter Hill Wildlife Sanctuary and Pemberton Memorial Forest on Arnold Road.

Greenberg Family Conservation Area

In 2016, Rebecca and Carolyn Greenberg donated their family's 65-acre forest in Westhampton to Kestrel. It has become our first neighborhood nature retreat. Over the past two years, stewardship staff and many dozens of volunteers have worked to improve the trail system within this picturesque forest.

While these trails are open to the public, the current entrance point along Southampton Road is often very wet and not suitable for parking. The Greenberg sisters have generously agreed to donate the adjacent 5-acre parcel that provides a more suitable location for the creation of a small parking area. Work began in August to construct the new unpaved parking area, which will accommodate about six cars. A new kiosk and trailhead will also be established there, connecting to the existing trail network.

Other amenities are being added to the Greenberg Family Conservation Area as well, including benches (see below) and a platform in the middle of the forest for public programs, as well as simply gathering and resting as a group.



"I have chosen to leave a bequest to Kestrel Land Trust in my will because I believe deeply in Kestrel's mission. The best way that I know to help us all create a more sustainable society is to support strong, visionary local organizations. I trust Kestrel to protect the Valley's forests and farms that will sustain generations to come."

— PENNY GILL

RETIRED PROFESSOR OF HUMANITIES,
MOUNT HOLYOKE COLLEGE



What Will Your Legacy Be?

Create Your Legacy Today

Learn more about opportunities to support land conservation at kestreltrust.org/give/legacy or contact Monica Green at monica@kestreltrust.org or (413) 549-1097.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO LEAVE A LEGACY FOR the Valley that will help ensure access to special outdoor places for future generations? Anyone can arrange a charitable donation now to be given at a future date.

Designating a bequest in your will is the most common way to do this. There are also other types of planned gifts that may provide tax benefits during your lifetime. Talk to your attorney about the best way for you to leave a legacy for the land with Kestrel Land Trust through your estate plans.

VOLUNTEER VOICES

Rachelle LaCroix



Rachelle just finished the Plant and Soil Science graduate program at UMass. She studies implications of climate change on carbon stored in wetlands.

IN 2014, WHEN I WAS STUDYING environmental science at UMass Amherst as an undergrad, my advisor suggested I look into volunteering as a way to get more experience in the field. I saw that Kestrel had opportunities to monitor conservation properties, and I liked that I could do that on my own time and get outside as well. I enjoyed going back to the same property every year and feeling like a steward of that land.

What I enjoyed just as much was spending time with my volunteer partner, Avril. We met as Kestrel volunteers, and every year we arranged to monitor our respective properties together.

I didn't expect volunteering with Kestrel would give me an opportunity to form a friendship with someone else from the community, but it did!

One of the first times Avril and I went out to Kestrel's Spalding Conservation Area, we decided we wanted to look at it from up on the ridge. Well, once we got up there, we didn't really know how to get down! We ended up scooting down the ravine on our bums to the lower portion of the property. Last year, we finally figured out how to get up and down there without having to do the ravine-butt-scoot maneuver. (Good thing the Dorie Goldman Trail is there now!)

Join the Stew Crew! kestreltrust.org/give/volunteer
Become a volunteer to help improve trails, put up signs, and care for the land.



**KESTREL
LAND TRUST**

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*Thank you for helping to
conserve the Valley you love!*

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Hawk Watch at Mount Holyoke Range
SEPT. 15 HADLEY

Mosses & Ferns Walk at Jabish Brook
OCT. 13 BELCHERTOWN

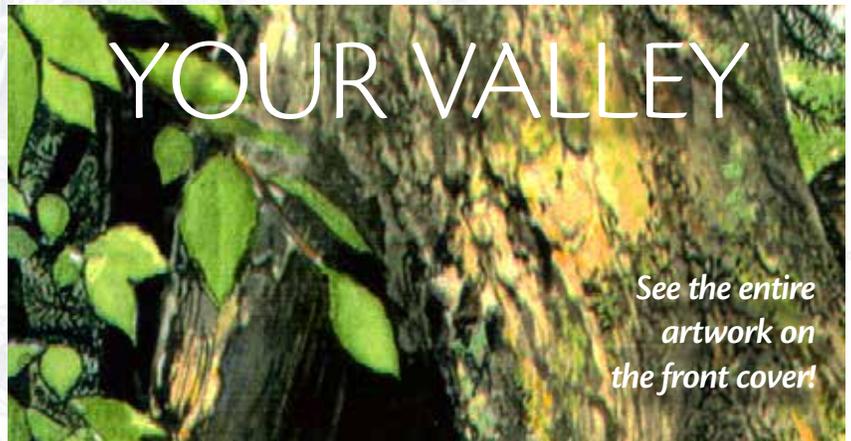
 kestreltrust.org/calendar

SAVE THE DATE!

10th Annual
5K for Farmland
& Farmers' Market Festival
Sunday, October 21, 2018



5K Run or 2-Mile Walk
Live Music, Local Food,
Nature Exhibits, & More
on Hadley Town Common!



*See the entire
artwork on
the front cover!*

COVER ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

Nancy Haver

Near Puffer's Pond WATERCOLOR

"Feeling most at home when I'm outdoors, I love living in a town (Amherst) that has conserved so many wild areas. My subject matter is usually landscapes—often watery ones, so I'm happy living in the Connecticut River Valley. I love the site at Puffer's Pond where that individual oak stands with its resilient attitude. It's atop a little mound, with the stream flowing below it."

See more of Nancy's work online at nancyhaver.com.