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Smith College Donates Conservation Restriction to Kestrel Land Trust

190-acres at the MacLeish Field Station in West Whately will be permanently protected.

Tucked up in the hills of West Whately, far from Smith College’s main campus in the City of Northampton, is the Ada and Archibald MacLeish Field Station. The hilltop forest and farmland owned by the College offers a place for students and faculty to conduct environmental research, outdoor education, or to simply enjoy a walk in the woods. The Conservation Restriction that Smith donated to Kestrel Land Trust will ensure that those uses will continue, while protecting wildlife habitat for the future.

“This conservation agreement sets in stone Smith’s good intentions now and into the future,” said Andrew Guswa, director of Smith’s Center for the Environment, Ecological Design, and Sustainability (CEEDES). “Protecting the MacLeish land is a way of demonstrating Smith’s leadership in environmental sustainability.”



Smith College Vice-President of Finance and Administration Ruth Constantine and Kestrel Board Chair Robert Jonas sign the CR document at a ceremony on July 30.

The MacLeish Field Station also includes the Bechtel Environmental Classroom, which was designed for Smith by Coldham and Hartman Architects to meet the Living Building Challenge, the highest standard for ecological design in the world. This Conserva-



Reid Bertone-Johnson, Manager of the MacLeish Field Station, explains how Smith College’s land is now part of a larger 5,000-acre block of protected forest.

Robert Jonas

tion Restriction on 190-acres of the Field Station far exceeds the land conservation component of the Living Building Challenge protocol.

The MacLeish Field Station is part of a critical contiguous block of forest identified by the Nature Conservancy as a “resilient” landscape: an area that has the potential to support a wide diversity of plants and wildlife as they adapt to climate change in the future. Adjacent lands protected by the Northampton Watershed Department, Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game, Conway State Forest, and Franklin Land Trust create a large block of protected forest totaling over 5,000 acres.

For Kestrel, the conservation of the MacLeish Field Station also marks an important milestone for our land trust’s efforts to partner with the Five Colleges to advance land conservation in the Valley. Robert Jonas, Kestrel’s Board Chair said, “Kestrel is honored to be invited by Smith College to become a steward of their land. Together, we can ensure the conservation and stewardship of forest habitat, encourage ecologically responsible education and research, and promote sustainable forestry and agriculture.”

Welcome to Our New AmeriCorps Service Members



Kestrel's New AmeriCorps MassLIFT Team, Ally Sullivan and Jack Sidar.

Kestrel has increased its capacity to engage in stewardship and outreach with the help of the AmeriCorps MassLIFT program over the past several years. We look forward to accomplishing even more this year with Jack and Ally!

Ally Sullivan, AmeriCorps MassLIFT Community Engagement Coordinator. "I recently graduated from the University of Vermont with a degree in Natural Resources. I'm passionate about land conservation having grown up next to a preserved forest in the South shore of Massachusetts. I am so excited to be working with Kestrel to engage the community in the new and lasting land conservation work being done in the Valley."

Kestrel Land Trust Hires Its First Stewardship Manager

Kestrel is pleased to announce an important addition to our staff with the hiring of our first Stewardship Manager, Christine Volonte. Chris has already served in a similar role as an AmeriCorps MassLIFT service member for Kestrel over the past two years. "Becoming Kestrel's first Stewardship Manager is an exciting and rewarding opportunity," Chris said. "I've developed strong connections to this region over the past two years, and I look forward to building our stewardship program in collaboration with our partners, volunteers, and the broader community."

Kestrel Nest Boxes Provide for a New Generation of Falcons

Beginning in 2012, Kestrel Land Trust AmeriCorps MassLIFT service members embarked on an effort to increase nesting sites for our namesake, the American kestrel. With the help of other volunteers, they constructed, installed, and monitored 12 nest boxes in five towns.

We are happy to report that this effort helped 10 new American Kestrels enter the world this year! And, the data collected by our volunteers will contribute to a statewide study dedicated to protecting and conserving this beautiful but threatened species. Because of our successful efforts, State ornithologist Andrew Vitz hopes to make the Pioneer Valley a focus for future efforts in kestrel-habitat conservation.

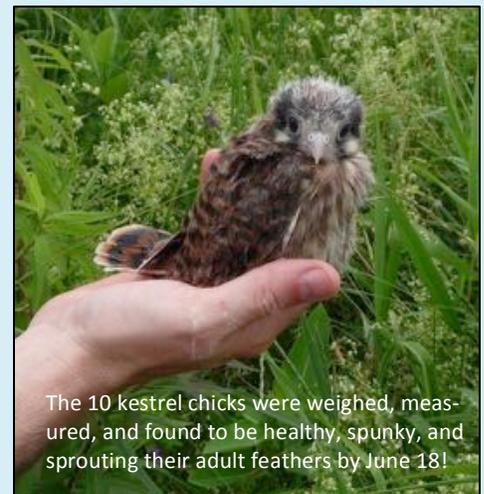


From March through June, 14 trained volunteers observed adult kestrels near seven of 12 nest boxes we installed the previous year.

State ornithologist Andrew Vitz, of MA Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, visited the nest boxes with Dave King, KLT Advisory Council, to place identification bands on the nestlings' legs for a statewide study in cooperation with Mass Audubon.



Two boxes housed nesting pairs. Five nestlings hatched in each of the two boxes in late-May. By June 4 they were already bright-eyed and downy.



The 10 kestrel chicks were weighed, measured, and found to be healthy, spunky, and sprouting their adult feathers by June 18!

Photos by Chris Volonte



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Upcoming Events

✈ **Sunday, November 3, 4 to 6 p.m.** Special Film Showing: "Root Hog or Die." With panel discussion following the film. Academy of Music, Northampton. \$15
Visit kestreltrust.org for details.

✈ **Saturday, November 16, 10 a.m. to Noon.** Explore the Northampton Meadows with Laurie Sanders. Please RSVP to office@kestreltrust.org or call 413-549-1097.

✈ **December 12, 4 to 8 p.m.** Kestrel Open House Holiday Party. 233 N. Pleasant St., Amherst. RSVP appreciated.

Join our email list for timely updates, events, and more. Visit kestreltrust.org, click on CONTACT US, and submit your name and email address.

Don't Miss It!

5K for Farmland & Farmers Market Festival: Sunday, October 20!

Run the 5K or walk the 2-mile route at the Common on West Street in Hadley.
(Day-of registration opens at 8 a.m. on Sunday: \$24).

Bring your friends to cheer you on, shop the market, and enjoy the festival:

- Tastings of local beer (Valley Malt) & wine (Mt. Warner Vineyards) at noon
 - Live music by The Ephemeral String Band
 - Live hawk exhibit by New England Falconry
 - Games for kids with Trevor the Games Man
- Unique local Farmers' Market: fruits, veggies, pastries, French Fries, local tacos, wine, fiber arts, lotions, chair massage, and more!

On Thursday 12/12/13, Kestrel will join more than 300 local non-profits in the annual online giving day, Valley Gives. **Subscribe to our e-news to learn how to participate and get updates at kestreltrust.org.**



And, mark your calendar for Kestrel's annual **Holiday Open House** at our Amherst office on **Valley Gives Day** from 4 - 8 p.m. to celebrate land and you! Email monica@kestreltrust.org for more information.

See How We've Grown!

With your support, Kestrel has dramatically expanded its capacity to engage in land conservation, stewardship, and community outreach. To see just what that means, we invite you to read our most recent report: *Kestrel Land Trust In Review: January 2012 - June 2013*.

The report is available in print by request or online at kestreltrust.org: Just click on "**See How We've Grown**" at the bottom left of the homepage. You'll read about the lands we've recently helped to protect, how we are caring for many new conservation areas into the future, and how dramatically our impact has increased over the past 10 years. We'll also share the stories of some of the landowners we have worked with over the past year and a half, and you'll learn why conserving their land was important to them and to the entire Valley.

