

VALLEY VIEWS



John Burk

KESTREL LAND TRUST

FALL 2017

Protecting the Best-Tasting Water in the Country

Conserving 25 acres protects drinking water for thousands of people in several towns.

Where would you expect to find the best-tasting water in the country—Colorado? California? In fact, you don't have to go nearly that far. Just head over to Southamptton or Easthampton: In 2008, the town of Southamptton's public water supply was named the best in the nation, and in 2015 the city of Easthampton won the same distinction.

It's no coincidence: Both communities' water comes from public wells fed by the Barnes Aquifer. It's a natural, underground system of rock, gravel, and sand that filters, moves, and stores water.

The entire system stretches for 12 miles under parts of Westfield, Holyoke, Southamptton, and Easthampton. Over 60,000 people depend on this aquifer for their drinking water. In Southamptton, a single municipal well operates at full capacity, so the town relies on Easthampton's wells to supplement supply during peak demand.

Cooperation and Patience Pay Off

That's why back in 1989, the City of Easthampton began talking with the Gwinner/LaFlam family about conserving their 25+ acre property of gently rolling, historic farmland, which the family has owned for generations. Bounded by Cook and County Roads in Southamptton, the land is positioned over a critical recharge area for the Barnes Aquifer. It also contains a

tributary to Broad Brook, directly upstream from Easthampton's well fields. If this land were developed, the aquifer's quality would be jeopardized by septic systems and increased runoff from residential development.

Finally, late this summer, this important piece of forest

and farmland over the Barnes Aquifer was permanently conserved. It couldn't have happened without the many years of cooperation between Easthampton and Southamptton. The towns worked together with the landowners and other organizations, coordinated

by Kestrel Land Trust, which helped secure a drinking water protection grant and Community Preservation Act funds. The two communities recognize that natural aquifers rarely follow town boundaries, so working together is the only way to preserve a critical and shared natural resource.

Not only does conserving this property protect the quality of the best-tasting water in the nation, it also offers



Communities sharing a critical drinking water source work together to preserve it.

recreational and wildlife benefits. The land abuts the 169-acre Southamptton Wildlife Management Area, and connects to the Mount Tom Range.

DID YOU KNOW? Opa-Opa Steak-

house in Southamptton brews its beer using town water, and Fort Hill Brewery in Easthampton touts its beer as being made from the city's award-winning water.



Kay was a skilled trail builder who backpacked materials in for the Beau Bridge Trail, constructing the bridges we use today.



Kay Burnett Leaves a Legacy for All of Us

Kathryn Burnett, known to many as the “trail lady” for whom the KB Trail on Mt. Tom was named, passed away on May 28, 2017, at age 87. Kay’s distinguished 50-year career at the Smith College music library led to her recognition as a pioneer in music cataloging.

Kay loved the woods and helped build many trails, which she believed were essential to connecting people to the land. She also served as a guiding force on the Mt. Tom Citizens Advisory Committee.

Her generous \$250,000 bequest to Kestrel Land Trust will make it possible to conserve more land on Mt. Tom and the Mount Holyoke Range, expanding public access to the mountains and land she loved.

Michael J. Elkins Memorial Woodland

A quiet cul-de-sac next to the woods with a swamp full of turtles: Michael Elkins was fortunate to grow up in this setting just a few blocks from downtown Amherst. His parents, Barbara and Arthur Elkins, recall Michael spending many hours in the woods as a child, and then becoming an amateur nature photographer as a teen.

For years, the family cared for these woods and expected they would always be there—until the land went up for sale. When a developer came along looking to build houses, Michael was outside enjoying the woods and alerted his parents.

After careful deliberation, the Elkins and their neighbors decided to pool their resources to buy the land, with the goal of protecting the woodland and preventing encroachment of buildings on the adjacent wetland.

Years later, the Elkins lost their son far too early in life. But the woodland Michael loved was not lost. In 2017, Barbara and Arthur donated the land to Kestrel Land Trust to honor Michael’s memory.

The 8-acre parcel included five house lots with frontage on East Pleasant Street, across from University of Massachusetts. While 6 acres of the most sensitive land will be permanently protected, because this land is located in a residential area one house lot will be sold to generate funds to help conserve ecologically important land elsewhere in Amherst.

The Elkins’ foresight and generosity in preserving their land in Michael’s memory is an inspiring example of how neighbors can become leaders in protecting the lands in the Valley that they love most.

In Your Community: Forest, Farm, and Historic Millpond Conserved

Holland Glen II, Belchertown

Cascading waterfalls and picturesque ravines surrounded by a lush forest and hiking trails: These are some of the features of the 45 acres added this summer to the Holland Glen Conservation Area in Belchertown. Kestrel now holds a conservation restriction on this town-owned land, and will partner with the town to expand parking and improve the trail system.



Runnymede Farm, Westhampton

The Runnymede Farm, owned by the Clapp family in Westhampton, is now Forever Farmland. This summer, Kestrel helped place 58 acres of valuable farmland in conservation with an Agri-cultural Preservation Restriction. Farmers lease the land to grow a variety of vegetables, while other parts of the land provide for haying, pasturing, and maple sugaring.

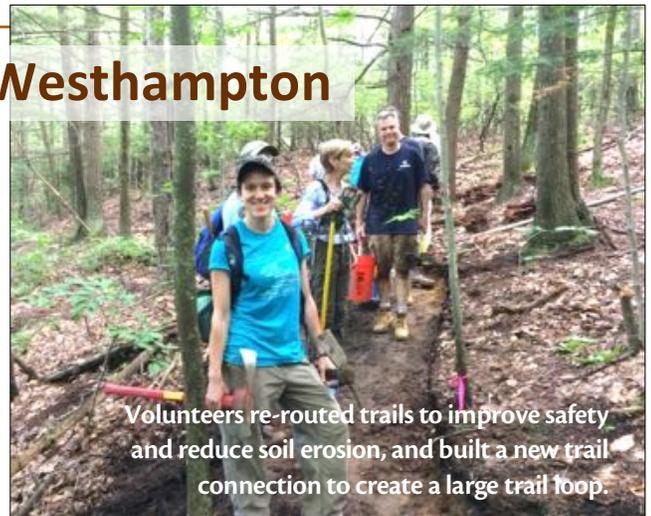
Lake Warner Dam, Hadley

The historic dam that creates Lake Warner is now ready for decades to come. In October, extensive reconstruction and repair work was completed, thanks to a state grant, Hadley CPA funds, and individual donors. The state has inspected and approved the repairs. This fall, we will begin the process of transferring ownership to the Friends of Lake Warner and placing a Historic Preservation Restriction on the dam.

Showing the Land Some Love in Westhampton

The rain held off almost magically during our first Community Trail Day at Kestrel's Greenberg Family Conservation Area. On that July day, 39 volunteers joined Kestrel staff to transform nearly 1,000 feet of trail in a single morning.

This forest, donated to Kestrel by the Greenberg family in 2016, has long been enjoyed by its neighbors, and over time an informal trail system evolved. Our goal is to improve that trail system so that everyone may enjoy this magical woodland and stream.



Volunteers re-routed trails to improve safety and reduce soil erosion, and built a new trail connection to create a large trail loop.

Enjoying a picnic lunch in the woods, then a nature walk with Laurie Sanders. Rebecca Greenberg shared her memories of the forest, and was thanked for her family's gift to the community.



WHAT YOU CAN DO: Join us for our second BIG trail day on Sunday, November 12, from 9 am to 12:30 pm. Get outdoors and help continue our trail improvements! Join us afterwards for a picnic lunch in the forest. Learn more on our Events page at kestreltrust.org or email jill@kestreltrust.org to RSVP.



Celebrating the Dedication of Long-Time Kestrel Volunteers

For more than 45 years, Kestrel has succeeded and thrived because of passionate people who give their time, energy, and expertise. On a sunny evening in June, we honored the service of

several retiring and transitioning Board Trustees at our first Community Picnic.

- **Paul Beaulieu:** Paul served on the board for 26 years, providing his scientific expertise and guiding the organization during a challenging transition.
- **Judith Eiseman:** Judy served on Kestrel's board for 30 years, playing a leading role in its evolution from an all-volunteer to a fully staffed land trust.
- **Margaret Hepler:** Peggy served on the board and stewardship committee for more than 15 years, and has conserved her own 40 acres of land, as well as another 165 acres of forest in Pelham.

• **Robert A. Jonas:** After five years of dedicated service as Board Chair during a key growth period for Kestrel, Jonas has passed the torch to a new chair, Scott Jackson. Jonas will continue to serve on the Board.

Our newest board members come from communities around the Valley, bringing local knowledge, as well as a new set of talents and perspectives.

• **Rosemary Arnold (Holyoke):** President of Winding River Land Conservancy & owner of Conklin Office Furniture

• **Ann Hallstein (Easthampton):** Environmental activist & retired pastor of First Church of Deerfield

• **Anthony Hill (South Hadley):** Microbiologist, amateur ornithologist & Audubon field researcher

• **Andrew Morehouse (Williamsburg):** Executive Director of Food Bank of Western MA

• **Joel Russell (Northampton):** Land use lawyer & co-founder of Dutchess Land Conservancy in NY

Read the tribute stories about our retiring Trustees and learn more about our current board members at kestreltrust.org.



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Upcoming Events

Visit kestreltrust.org for details.

-  **Sunday, November 12, 9 am– 12:30 pm, Greenberg Family Conservation Area, Westhampton.** Volunteer trail workday and picnic.
-  **Saturday, December 2, 1 pm – 3 pm, Starlight Llama B&B, Northampton.** Thoreau walk & talk to visit a replica Walden cabin with John Clapp.
-  **Wednesday, December 20, 6 pm – 7:30 pm, Fort River Trail, Hadley.** Winter solstice mindfulness walk & celebration with Robert A. Jonas.

GIVE BACK TO THE VALLEY

4 Smart Tips for Year-End Giving

- 1. DOUBLE YOUR IMPACT:** If your employer matches charitable gifts, be sure to request the match.
- 2. GIVE SECURITIES:** Donating appreciated securities may offer tax advantages. Call 413-549-1097 or write to monica@kestreltrust.org for stock gift instructions.
- 3. GIVE FROM YOUR IRA:** If you are 70½ or older, you may benefit by donating directly from your IRA; check with your advisor.
- 4. PREFER TO CHARGE YOUR GIFT?** Visit us online at kestreltrust.org/give/ any time of the day or night.

Want more information? Go to kestreltrust.org/give or email monica@kestreltrust.org.



Kestrel welcomes two new—and one returning—AmeriCorps service members, serving through the TerraCorps program for 2017-2018. From left, Lee Halasz (Regional Conservation Coordinator), Marilyn Castriotta (Community Engagement Coordinator), & Jill Fusco (Land Stewardship Coordinator). Learn more about them at kestreltrust.org/about/people.

We are thankful for your support
to conserve and care for the Valley you love.

Happy Thanksgiving!

John Burk