Special Places Near You Need Your Vote

Take action in your town to help save forests and farms!

Conserving the lands you love depends on community support. The Community Preservation Act (CPA) is a tangible example of this support, as it’s a valuable source of funding for local conservation efforts. It’s often combined with state or federal funding to conserve even more. Funds are available to towns that have adopted the CPA, to be used for conserving land, among other goals. You are an important player in this process, as your vote at Town Meeting will determine whether CPA funds will support a conservation project.

Four special places—both farmland and forests—in Amherst, Pelham, Belchertown and Southampton need financial support from the CPA to be conserved. Here’s how each of those efforts will benefit the community:

PELHAM: Buffam Community Forest to Be Created (145 acres)

Forested lands along Buffam Brook and surrounding the Moose Tracks Conservation Area would become a public Community Forest. Forest ecologists with UMass Amherst would manage the land with innovative approaches aimed at creating a climate-change resilient forest. New recreational opportunities would open up an extensive trail system, and educational programming would be created for young people.

AMHERST: Foxcroft Farm to Be Saved (62 acres)

One of the last unprotected farms in South Amherst, this land is part of a block of active farming and reflects the town’s agricultural heritage. The landowners plan to expand their farming operation from primarily hay production to growing vegetables and berries. Hop Brook, an important tributary of the Fort River, runs through the land. And, the farm is part of the scenic view from the popular Norwottuck Rail Trail.

SOUTHAMPTON: Barnes Aquifer to Be Protected (25 acres)

Scenic, rolling farmland and forest lies over the Barnes Aquifer, a critical source of clean drinking water for Easthampton and Southampton. Willing landowners are partnering with the towns and Kestrel, offering a bargain sale to protect the land. Some of the land would continue to be farmed, while other areas would provide access for recreation to the State Wildlife Management Area in Southampton.

BELCHERTOWN: Holland Glen to Be Expanded (45 Acres)

Expanding the iconic 300-acre Holland Glen Conservation Area will conserve forested lands that include cascading waterfalls and scenic vistas. This beautiful area provides excellent wildlife habitat for bear, moose, and bobcat, which will become critical for climate change resilience. You can also enjoy hiking and fishing here, too.

HERE’S WHAT YOU CAN DO!

If you are a resident of one of these towns, go to spring Town Meeting and VOTE “YES” on the CPA funding to help conserve these special places in your community.
Paradise City Arts Festival Auction Will Benefit the Land

Kestrel Land Trust believes in nurturing a love of the land so that future generations will continue to care for it as we do. One of the many ways people can connect with the land is through the arts. The picturesque New England landscape has inspired artists throughout history, such as Thomas Cole who painted the Oxbow in East Hampton.

That’s why we are excited to announce that Kestrel is partnering with the Paradise City Arts Festival (PCAF) as the beneficiary of their silent auction. This world-class arts fair takes place May 28, 29, & 30 at the fairgrounds in Northampton.

“Spring is a time when we are reminded of the beauty of the natural world and truly appreciate our open spaces,” wrote Linda and Geoffrey Post, PCAF creators. “It’s why we’re especially excited to welcome this spring’s benefit partner, Kestrel Land Trust. We applaud their mission to preserve our natural wonders, and we thank them for serving as the inspiration for this spring’s special themed exhibition, ‘American Beauty: From Landscape to Dreamscape’.”

Join us to enjoy the 260 talented artists of all kinds from across the country, great food, live music, and “smART talk” presentations. Hundreds of art works donated by the artists will be offered at the auction, and all proceeds will support Kestrel’s work to conserve the land that has inspired artists for generations.

Visit festivals.paradisecityarts.com for more details. And, watch your mailbox for a postcard with a coupon for $2 off 2 admissions to the festival. Come make a bid and take home amazing art to inspire you!

Meet Our AmeriCorps MassLIFT Volunteers!

Andrea Caluori-Rivera, Community Engagement Coordinator: I moved to the Valley 12 years ago from New York City to study art history at Mt. Holyoke College. 19th century artists like Thomas Cole increased my love for the Valley’s mountains, forests, and waterways. After completing my graduate degree in Connecticut, I returned to this area because I wanted to contribute to the work being done to protect our region’s remarkable landscape and cultural heritage.

At Kestrel, I have been fortunate to help create events and support programs that highlight the cultural and artistic aspects of the land, inspiring people to think about our relationship with nature in ways that are meaningful to them. I am so grateful for this opportunity and for all that it continues to give me.

Brittany Laginhas, Land Stewardship Coordinator: Despite growing up in the highly developed state of Rhode Island, I was fortunate to live near a 530-acre protected area. This place served as a sanctuary for me to play, contemplate, or enjoy nature’s beauty. Since then, my relationship with nature has expanded to include an environmental stewardship component where I actively study and manage the landscape in order to improve habitat for wildlife, as well as to develop opportunities for people to engage with nature. Serving with Kestrel has given me a great appreciation for the unique mosaic of farmlands, woodlands, and waterways in this region. And, I’ve enjoyed working on projects that foster positive relationships between the community and this extraordinary landscape.

Remembering Ann Kearns & Her Legacy to the Land

In March, we lost a special member of the Kestrel community, Ann Kearns. As well as being an accomplished choral conductor, Ann was a member of Kestrel’s Advisory Council, a dedicated conservationist, a hard-working volunteer, and a close friend.

If you have ever been on one of Kestrel’s monthly Walks & Talks or at our spring Breakfast & Birding, then you have been touched by Ann’s passion. Hundreds of people over the years have gotten closer to nature because of the wide-ranging outings she planned for us across the Valley.

Ann was also involved in the local music community, and helped connect music with nature through concerts she helped organize. She would be proud to know that a “community sing” event in her honor brought music lovers and land lovers together once again, in support of Kestrel’s work to conserve the Valley she loved so much.

Ann will be greatly missed, but her legacy will live on in all of us.
In the Community: Saving North Hadley’s Historic Millpond

For 350 years, Lake Warner has been part of the culture and natural history of the community and the region.

One of New England’s first dams was built in North Hadley in 1662 on the Mill River. The river’s waters, harnessed to power a gristmill, created North Hadley Pond—also known today as Lake Warner. Throughout the 350-year history of this dam site, the flowing water has powered gristmills, saw mills, soap factories, and a broom and knife factory, among others.

Lake Warner lies at the foot of Mount Warner, which is home to conserved forest and farmland. Below the dam, the Mill River winds through a steep “Red Rocks” gorge to join the Connecticut River.

The lake has been enjoyed by generations of families for boating and fishing. It’s a popular place for kayaking and canoeing in the spring and early summer. And in the winter, local ice-fisherman gather to test their skills.

Restoring the Dam, Saving the Pond

The dam that exists today dates back to 1919, listed on the National Register of Historic Places as part of the North Hadley’s historic mill village. Not surprisingly, the dam is showing its age, and because the community cares deeply about Lake Warner, the historic dam is being repaired.

The estimated cost to repair the dam is $350,000. In May 2015, Hadley Town Meeting overwhelmingly approved $100,000 in Community Preservation Act funds for this effort. Representative Scibak secured $125,000 from the state’s 2016 budget. Kestrel Land Trust has provided $75,000 for an engineering study, legal research to clear title, and project management. Generous individuals and business have also donated $75,000 through the nonprofit group Friends of Lake Warner (FOLW) and Kestrel.

This past winter, the permits for the repair work were secured, and the process of selecting a construction contractor began this spring. At the end of the competitive bid process, the selected contractor is expected to begin the repair work this summer, 2016.

The Future of the Dam

After the dam is restored, ownership will be transferred to the Friends of Lake Warner. To cover the future annual costs of maintaining the dam, a dedicated fund of $50,000 has been established from private donations.

Community support has made this project possible, giving future generations the chance to enjoy this historic lake too.

Don’t Let Ticks Keep You Indoors!

Have you been out for a hike or into your garden yet? It’s not too early to protect against ticks. With a warm winter behind us, there’s a good chance the tick population will be larger than we’ve seen in recent years. That’s not a pleasant notion given that tick-borne illnesses have been on the rise.

But, have no fear! Here are some tips to keep ticks under control so you can safely enjoy your time outdoors.

1. Start doing tick checks now! No amount of Ben’s Deep Woods can replace the effectiveness of doing a tick check on yourself, your kids, and your pets. Make it a habit every time you come indoors.

2. Socks over pants is totally fashionable. Thanks to skinny jeans, it’s officially cool to wear socks on the outside of your pants with hiking boots. No excuses! Make it hard for the tick to get to your skin.

3. Stay in the middle of the trail. Sounds silly because ticks are on the ground, right? No! Ticks can climb up low hanging branches or tall grasses. When you’re out hiking a trail, stay in the middle.

4. Protect your pets. Pets that roam outdoors might otherwise be known as “tick shuttles.” Ticks jump on board and get a free ride into your house. Ask your vet which tick prevention treatment is best for your pet.

And if all else fails, studies have found that receiving antibiotics within 72 hours (that’s 3 days) can prevent Lyme disease. Don’t let the ticks get you down, or rather, keep you stuck inside!

See more tips on our blog at kestreltrust.wordpress.com.
Upcoming Events

Visit kestreltrust.org for details.
Register by email: office@kestreltrust.org.

Saturday, April 30, 7 am - 10 am, Easthampton.
Breakfast & Birding: Learn how to ID birds by song & sight, then enjoy a hot breakfast. $25 / person.

Saturday, MAY 14, 9 am - 11 am, Hadley OR
8 am - 10 am in Williamsburg. Celebrate International Migratory Bird Day with a guided bird walk led by local experts Dave King and Geoff LeBaron.

Saturday, JUNE 4, 9 am - 11 am, Amherst. Uncover wildflowers on the Mt. Holyoke Range with UMass botanist Karen Searcy.

Conserve the Valley You Love

Let’s see how much farther we can get when we go together.

Give back to the Valley you love.
kestreltrust.org

Valley Gives

It’s an exciting day of online generosity throughout the Valley. Be sure you don’t miss it: Visit our website and subscribe to Kestrel’s e-newsletter today!