Forests are a vital part of our Valley’s landscape, and now that includes a special kind of forest. The new Buffam Brook Community Forest, only the second of its kind in Massachusetts, will be a unique “living laboratory” to demonstrate the benefits of sustainable forestry on climate change resilience.

In partnership with private landowners, the Town of Pelham and Kestrel Land Trust have created this 161-acre public forest to be managed for the educational, recreational, and economic benefit of the community. Kestrel holds a Conservation Restriction on the town-owned land, and will partner in its management.

Former Congressman John Olver helped spearhead the idea of protecting this land while managing it to address climate change. Olver was one of several generous landowners who made the project possible by selling their land at a discounted price.

Another important piece of the Community Forest model is to provide forestry-related educational programming for landowners, students, and researchers. For example, landowners will be able to visit this “demonstration forest” to learn how different approaches can support their goals on their own land. The University of Massachusetts Amherst and the Hitchcock Center for the Environment have signed on as educational partners to provide students of all ages opportunities to learn about caring for our forests.

That learning process has already begun. Paul Catanzaro, UMass Extension Associate Professor, recently worked with students in his Forest Measurements class to conduct an inventory of the properties that make up the Buffam Brook Community Forest.

“This project provides an excellent opportunity to demonstrate different forest stewardship techniques that landowners can implement to increase their own forest’s resiliency.” Paul explains, “It also provides the chance to monitor forests over time so that we can better understand their responses to the challenges they face.”
New “Views of Mt. Holyoke Range” Art Exhibit Will Benefit the Land

For generations, the Mount Holyoke Range has inspired artists with its picturesque views.

A new exhibit by R. Michelson Galleries in Northampton brings 24 talented artists together to showcase a wide range of styles and media inspired by this landscape. “Views of the Mount Holyoke Range” will be on display through June 30th at the gallery at 132 Main St. and online at rmichelson.com.

All of the artworks are available for purchase, so you could bring one home! A portion of the proceeds from the sales will support Kestrel’s work to conserve the iconic Mount Holyoke Range. Kestrel is grateful to all the artists and R. Michelson Galleries for their generous support!

Communities Rally to Support Public Lands for Recreation & Wildlife

Pemberton Forest, Pelham
Town Meeting voters in Pelham supported the conservation of 52 acres of key forestland that will improve public access to trails on more than 125 acres of adjacent lands. Voters approved $50,000 from Community Preservation Act funds, which will leverage $290,000 in state and private grants already pledged.

Horse Mountain, Hatfield
Thanks to community support, the conservation of 128 acres on iconic Horse Mountain is fully funded! This forest provides critical wildlife habitat in Hatfield and Williamsburg. Town Meeting voters in Hatfield approved $40,000 in Community Preservation Act funds, which will be combined with more than $200,000 in state and private grants. The final step is for the town of Williamsburg to vote to take ownership of their portion of the land.
Saving Foxcroft Farm for the Future

One of the last farms in Amherst benefits people & wildlife.

Farming was a way of life in Amherst for generations, but over the decades, fewer families were able to hold on to their farms. That’s one reason why conserving farmland along South East Street has been a top priority for the Town of Amherst. Now, Foxcroft Farm, one of the last unprotected farms in this part of town, is permanently conserved.

“Protecting this farmland creates a contiguous block of preserved farms, which will help sustain the local agricultural productivity of Amherst,” said David Ziomek Assistant Town Manager and Director of Conservation and Development.

Farmland Provides More Than Crops

The 63-acre Foxcroft Farm stretches between South East Street and the Norwottuck Rail Trail, as well as the Lawrence Swamp Conservation Area. With its extensive frontage on the Rail Trail—popular for biking and walking—conserving this farmland ensures that the sweeping views toward the Mount Holyoke Range will be there forever for everyone to enjoy.

And, as the farm is next to Lawrence Swamp and Hop Brook, it also helps support surrounding wildlife habitat. James Hoerle, the owner and operator of Foxcroft Farm, is fond of all the wildlife found on the farm—having spotted bobcat, bear, and many species of birds, including kestrels.

Jim Hoerle said, “We could not have done this without the enormous help from Kestrel Land Trust. They were there with a steady hand and kept us on track. They truly care!”

Funding for this project was provided by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources, the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Town of Amherst’s Community Preservation Act Fund, and Kestrel Land Trust.

Final 4 Acres Still to Be Saved

Now, a 4-acre estate lot—an integral part of the farm—remains to be conserved in order for all of Foxcroft Farm to be protected forever. Kestrel and the Town are initiating a fundraising effort in the coming months to complete this next phase of the project.

WHAT YOU CAN DO: Help protect the final 4 acres of Foxcroft Farm! Just $75,000 is needed to complete this project. Go to kestrreltrust.org and make a contribution today!

Kestrel Takes Action Against Climate Change With Fossil Fuel Divestment

Kestrel’s mission to conserve and care for forests, farms, and riverways in the Valley protects the future health of our planet. The work we do is impacted by—and has an impact on—the crisis of climate change that is now defining our future. The overwhelming scientific consensus is that the burning of fossil fuels is warming our planet and threatening our global life support systems.

That’s why Kestrel’s Board of Trustees has voted to eliminate equity holdings in companies owning fossil fuel reserves in all of the long-term endowment accounts that support our work. By avoiding investment in fossil fuel industries, we send a strong message in support of renewable energy that fits with our responsibility for the health of the planet. Kestrel’s Trustees believe that divestment is an appropriate ethical, financial, and ecological decision. We began the divestment process in the second quarter of 2017 and expect to complete it this calendar year.

Learn more about divestment at climatechange.lta.org/divest-sri/
Upcoming Events
Visit kestreltrust.org for details.

- **Saturday, June 3, 9 – 11 am, Applewood Orchard, Amherst.** Nature photography workshop for beginners. $5 to $10 sliding scale.
- **Sunday, June 4, 9 – 11 am, Shutesbury.** Wildflowers with UMass Botanist Karen Searcy.
- **Saturday, June 10, 9 am - Noon, Belchertown.** Fly-fishing workshop with Trout Unlimited.
- **Saturday, July 15, 8 – 10 am, Hadley.** Kayaking the Connecticut River with John & Wendy Sinton.

Find New Places to Explore Near You!

From steep mountain trails to wide open meadows to meandering brookside footpaths, there’s no shortage of natural areas to explore in the Valley. And it’s likely at least one of these special places is near you.

On our new website, we have a page dedicated to helping you choose your next adventure. You’ll learn what the area has to offer, how to get there, and what to look for when you’re exploring. Go to kestreltrust.org, click on “Connect” and select “Places to Explore.”

We will continue adding more places to explore, so check back often.

If you’d like to help us highlight a conservation area that you love, email kari@kestreltrust.org to find out how!