What does a “sustainable” future look like to you? While we all may have different answers to this question, it probably includes a world in which we consume less, reuse more, and meet our basic needs (food, shelter, water, energy) with natural resources from our own region. For Hampshire College, building a sustainable future is an important part of their vision.

In addition to sourcing much of their food from local farms, generating energy from solar panels, and encouraging students to research approaches to sustainability, Hampshire College is demonstrating that a commitment to sustainability would not be complete without conserving land. Forests not only provide us with clean water and clean air, but they are essential for addressing the challenges of our warming climate.

“Hampshire’s efforts in sustainability reach beyond our campus, and we are delighted to protect this valuable resource.”

—Beth Hooker, Director of Food, Farm, & Sustainability at Hampshire College

Hampshire College Takes Sustainability to the Land
Conserving forestland on the Mount Holyoke Range contributes to a better future for all of us.

“Hampshire’s efforts in sustainability reach beyond our campus,” said Beth Hooker, Hampshire’s Director of Food, Farm, and Sustainability. “That is why we are delighted to partner with Kestrel Land Trust, the state, and the Town of Hadley to protect 46 acres of the College’s land at the base of the Mount Holyoke Range.”

The newly conserved forest and meadow lies between Bay Road and Chmura Road, not far from the main Hampshire campus in Amherst. In addition to preserving wildlife habitat while allowing for sustainable forestry, the land will provide outdoor educational experiences for students, and will include a hiking trail that will be open for the public to enjoy.

Leading the Way With a Commitment to the Land
This land conservation project also met an important requirement for the College’s new “Living Building”: the R. W. Kern Center. To receive Living Building Certification, the Center must be a net-zero energy, waste, and water structure. And, to reduce the impact of the structure’s footprint on wildlife habitat, certification requires an equal amount of land to be permanently conserved. Though certification only requires Hampshire to protect 3 acres for this project, the College has now conserved 15 times more land on the Range.

Kristin DeBoer, Kestrel’s Executive Director, said, “Hampshire College is leading the way to show how educational institutions can protect and care for their land as part of a commitment to environmental sustainability, not only on their core campus but in natural areas that are critical to the entire Pioneer Valley.”
**Invasive Plants: Can’t Beat ‘em? Eat ‘em!**

Weeds are just plants growing somewhere we don’t want them. But some weeds are really bad neighbors called “invasives” that can wreak havoc in your garden or across an entire forest, field, or wetland. Jennifer Seredeljko, AmeriCorps MassLIFT Land Steward, found one enjoyable way to control them is to eat them.

A plant is considered “invasive” if it thrives outside of its natural range, harming or out-competing native plants and wildlife. They often spread easily, grow rapidly, and are very hard to control. Some invasive plants were brought to this country from other regions for ornamental or medicinal purposes.

Jenn and our Land Steward volunteers have taken aim at several types of invasive plants on our conserved lands, including Autumn Olive and Garlic Mustard, whose names hint at their tasty possibilities. At work-parties this spring and summer, the volunteers pulled the young plants, and picked seedpods or berries to prevent their spread.

But instead of simply destroying the plants, Jenn held workshops demonstrating how to use these edible weeds in the kitchen. “I enjoy cooking, like lots of people do, and we all enjoy eating, so it’s a fun way to learn about invasive plants and take care of the land at the same time,” Jenn said. The recipes included Garlic Mustard Pesto and sweet or tangy Autumn Olive Jam.

Controlling invasive plants is something you can help with too. Learn more about identifying and controlling invasives on your land at eddmaps.org/ipane/species/. Or join one of our work parties! Email office@kestreltrust.org for details.

**Common-Sense Caution:** Don’t eat any plant unless you are certain of its identity. Consult an expert before foraging, and beware of herbicide use in the area.

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**Neighbors Come Together to Build Bridges of All Kinds**

It was a glorious June day when 35 friends and neighbors gathered at the Scarborough Brook Conservation Area in Belchertown. Hosted by the Friends of Scarborough Brook, the gathering’s goal was to build a new footbridge into the entrance of this well-loved place, which Kestrel protected in partnership with the Town in 2005. But the festive potluck party afterwards strengthened the bridges between neighbors as well.

Volunteer Tyler Bergeron had done the initial heavy work of constructing the bridge with donated materials, but there was still work for those who helped finish the task. Afterwards, neighbors walked the fields to view wildflowers, enjoyed delicious food they brought to share, and had lively conversations. The mood was highlighted with music, as two fiddlers and a guitar player from the neighborhood provided the alfresco entertainment.

Jane Bryden, Kestrel Board Trustee and one of the organizers for the Friends of Scarborough Brook said, “It was a wonderful community effort, and encouraged a sense of belonging to care for this beautiful area that we share.”

**You Can Help Too by Being a “Friend”**

Having good friends like these at any public conservation land can benefit your community. We’ll be working more closely with “Friends of” groups throughout the Valley with help from our new Community Conservation Manager, Kat Deely (see page 3). Would you like to make a difference for a place you love by joining or starting a “Friends of” group near you? Email Kat@kestreltrust.org with your interest and ideas!
Spring
by Mary Oliver

Somewhere
a black bear
has just risen from sleep
and is staring
down the mountain.
All night
in the brisk and shallow restlessness
of early spring
I think of her,
her four black fists
flicking the gravel,
hers tongue
like a red fire
touching the grass,
the cold water.
There is only one question:
how to love this world.
I think of her rising
like a black and leafy ledge
to sharpen her claws against
the silence
of the trees.
Whatever else
my life is
with its poems
and its music
and its glass cities,
it is also this dazzling darkness
coming down the mountain,
breathing and tasting;
all day I think of her—
her white teeth,
her wordlessness,
her perfect love.

New Staff & Trustees Support a Vision of Caring for Land & Community

With renewed energy and focus on communities of all kinds, we are excited to embark on a new three-year strategic plan. Our enhanced mission is “to conserve and care for forests, farms, and riverways in the Valley, while nurturing an enduring love of the land.” Along with our current dedicated staff and Board members, three new staff and three new Trustees will be working with you to care for our Valley.

- **Kat Deely, Community Conservation Manager:** Protecting lands for the public and creating opportunities to engage the community on the land to strengthen bonds between people and nature.
- **Tim Fisk, Operations Manager:** Developing comprehensive financial strategies and streamlining internal operations to support a sustainable organization over the long term.
- **Mark Wamsley, Land Conservation Manager:** Helping landowners find ways to permanently conserve their working farmland and forestland.
- **Joshua Epstein, Trustee:** Learning about different communities’ needs and values to engage people with the land.
- **Marvin Moriarty, Trustee:** Using his expertise as a biologist and retired Region 5 Director of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to help conserve wildlife habitat on a landscape scale.
- **Joan Robb, Trustee:** Engaging children, urban communities, and the arts community in building connections to and enjoying the natural world.

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Upcoming Events

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

- **Sunday, September 13, 10 a.m. – Noon.** Annual Hawk Migration Watch on Mt. Holyoke Range with Dave King.
- **Sunday, September 20, 3 p.m.** Dorie Goldman Memorial Concert, Grace Episcopal Church, Amherst.
- **Saturday, October 3, 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.** Mount Warner history & ecology with Pete Westover.

Together, we’re caring for the Valley you love.
Donate online anytime at kestraltrust.org

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Community Notes

Remembering a Friend of the Valley

Friends and family gathered in June to dedicate a portion of the trail at Amethyst Brook Conservation Area to Dorie Goldman. Dorie was a baker and a Kestrel Land Trust volunteer with a passion for the wilderness. Access to the conservation area and trailhead is on Pelham Road in Amherst.