

YOUR VALLEY

CONSERVE | CARE | CONNECT

WINTER 2018



**KESTREL
LAND TRUST**

*WHAT'S INSIDE: Preserving the Magic of the Woods
Expanding Natural Parks in Amherst & Easthampton
Mt. Tom Trail Project Builds Skills for the Future*



**KESTREL
LAND TRUST**

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A Note For You

Dear friend of the Valley,

KEEP CALM & CARRY ON: This WWII motto often comes to my mind as 2018 comes to a close. It has been a rough year for the planet—droughts, floods, wildfires, divisive politics, senseless violence. In the midst of these challenges, though, I find strength in knowing that because of your support, Kestrel can continue to **KEEP CALM & CONSERVE LAND.**

Together, we are protecting vast forests to mitigate climate change. We are creating trails and conservation areas close to home to bring people of all ages better health and well-being. We are protecting farmland as the foundation of a resilient local food system.

It's a big undertaking and there is much to do in 2019 and beyond. Thank you for being part of this community that's committed to conserving, caring for, and connecting to the Valley you love. I hope that the beauty and resiliency of the Valley's lands will bring you peace and joy this holiday season.

Kristin DeBoer, *Executive Director*

FROM THE HEART OF THE VALLEY

Winter Sketches by Marianne Gambaro

*Sun slants low in western sky
lacking the strength to climb,
saturating all in its apricot glow.*

*Back from northern summers
juncos forage in frost-kissed flora
scoring the occasional seed.*

*A cardinal streaks
a crimson slash across
the taupe landscape.*

*Beneath snow laden boughs
evergreens offer shelter
for those seeking respite.*

*To the delight of otters
rivers run with abandon
ignoring their ice edged banks.*

*Oaks cling tenaciously
to leather leaves
challenging wind and sleet.*

*Anticipating spring's sweet elixir
maples will soon send their sap
on its inevitable ascent.*



PHOTO BY JIM GAMBARO

Belchertown residents **Marianne & Jim Gambaro** fled the asphalt of New Jersey for the verdant beauty of the Pioneer Valley 40 years ago. Following careers in nonprofit public relations and human services respectively, they now write and photograph for pleasure, finding inspiration throughout the region.

You can see more of their work at margampoetry.wordpress.com and jimgambarophotography.zenfolio.com.

Crossing the Finish Line Together

On a chilly Sunday in October, hundreds of runners, walkers, families and farmers came out for the 10th Annual 5K for Farmland & Farmers' Market Festival on the Hadley Town Common. After 10 years, this was the last 5K for Farmland at this site.

Executive Director Kristin DeBoer and Dave Martula of the Town of Hadley created the first event in 2009 to highlight the importance of saving local farmland during Hadley's 350th anniversary. With help from the Sugarloaf Mountain Athletic Club and Hadley's 350th Anniversary Committee, the 5K for Farmland was born in the heart of Hadley's farm country, with a running route through historic farmland known as the Great Meadow and the Honey Pot.



CONNECT

The 5K for Farmland & Farmers' Market Festival has brought thousands of people together to help save our priceless local farms and forests.

Over the next 10 years, thousands of participants enjoyed the Farmers' Market, live music, local food, and local craft beer donated by Valley Malt, which became a signature post-race treat.

"For a decade, this has been our biggest annual event and each time it brought together hundreds of people of all ages to run, walk, support local farmers, and raise awareness about the need to conserve our Valley's precious farmland," said Kristin. "It has been a great community event, but there are exciting things coming for Kestrel over the next several years, so we're looking for new ways to engage even more people around the Valley."

Thank you to everyone who joined us for the 5K for Farmland over the past 10 years and stay tuned for what's coming next!

10 Years of the 5K for Farmland



"I've enjoyed so many things about this event: The community feeling, the farm vendors, running in this gorgeous place, and supporting a cause I believe in."

-2018 5K for Farmland participant



4,000+ participants



75+ business sponsors

\$150,000+ raised



10,000+ acres farmland & forests conserved with YOUR support



Join the Kestrel Community Crew!

kestreltrust.org/give/volunteer

Become a volunteer to help connect people to the land with events, educational programs, and more!

Real Magic Is Found in the Woods

by Kari Blood



When I was a child growing up in upstate New York, there was magic all around me. I found that magic in The Woods, as we reverently called them, that surrounded our neighborhood. I could wander through my own backyard to the footpath leading into the forest of oaks and hickories, and look for life in the nearby stream.

Back then, I imagined that every other child must also have a magic forest in their own backyard that they explored every day. Unfortunately, that wasn't the case then—and it is even less true today.

Being Outdoors Vital for All Ages

One factor is screen time: According to a recent national survey by the Kaiser Family Foundation, children aged 8 to 18 spend, on average, nearly 8 hours a day on electronic devices, but only a few minutes outdoors. Another important factor is simply the lack of access to public

parks or trails. The Trust for Public Land estimates that across the United States, more than 100 million people — children and adults — don't have a park within a 10-minute walk of home.

The impact is significant: Research continues to show that having access to nature not only improves physical health, but mental and emotional well-being as well. Around the world, studies show that exposure to undeveloped land with natural vegetation, including urban parks, leads to better health: lower blood pressure, less stress and reduced rates of diabetes. As little as 15 minutes per day spent outdoors can also help relieve symptoms of depression and anxiety, improve memory and enhance creativity.

The nonprofit Children and Nature Network cites research that shows kids who play outside are happier and more creative, and do better in school. Spending time in nature (even being able to see it from their

classroom windows) can improve kids' academic performance, boost their focus and attention, and enhance their problem-solving ability.

In an era when technology is consuming more of our time—and development is consuming more of our landscape—parks, trails and public conservation areas provide a valuable opportunity to connect to the land. Not everyone can live in a neighborhood that backs up to The Woods, so we must work together to ensure special places like this are open to all.

"Being in nature not only improves physical health, but mental and emotional well-being as well."



Find Your Next Favorite Place

In the Pioneer Valley, there are many places to get outdoors. The challenge can be knowing how to find them and what to do once you get there. Sometimes trail maps don't exist, or if they do, they may be difficult to find or use.

That's why Kestrel has created the "Trails for Everyone" downloadable map collection. It includes 20 suggested walking routes on public conservation areas or trails in five towns. Each family-friendly route can be completed in an hour or less. The maps include directions and a description of the trail with special things to look for. You may even discover a place close to home you didn't know about!

Kestrel thanks Northampton-based design firm Transit Authority Figures for donating design services, and the Leo S. Walsh Foundation for additional support.

Get Your Trail Maps & Get Outdoors!

kestreltrust.org/trail-maps-release-2018

Take a walk somewhere new to you: Download your trail map today!

Natural Parks & Trails Expanding in Amherst and Easthampton

150 years ago, naturalist John Burroughs said, “I go to nature to be soothed and healed, and to have my senses put in order.”

Even then, the need to stay connected to the natural world in a modern society was recognized. With your support, Kestrel is now working on several projects to expand protected land and improve access to the Mount Holyoke and Mount Tom Ranges.

Sweet Alice Conservation Area Expands

Soon you will have new access points to explore the Mount Holyoke Range from the Sweet Alice Conservation Area in Amherst. Kestrel partnered with the Town of Amherst to expand this conservation area by 28 acres this fall. The land was purchased from Marty Epstein and Lisa Epstein, the daughters of Sy and Alice Epstein, for whom the original conservation area was named.

Located off Bay Road, near the Atkins Village Center on Route 116, the newly conserved land contains a pond and a portion of the old trolley line that went up over the Notch until the 1920s. The property connects to more than 30 miles of local trails as well as the 215-mile New England National Scenic Trail (NET).

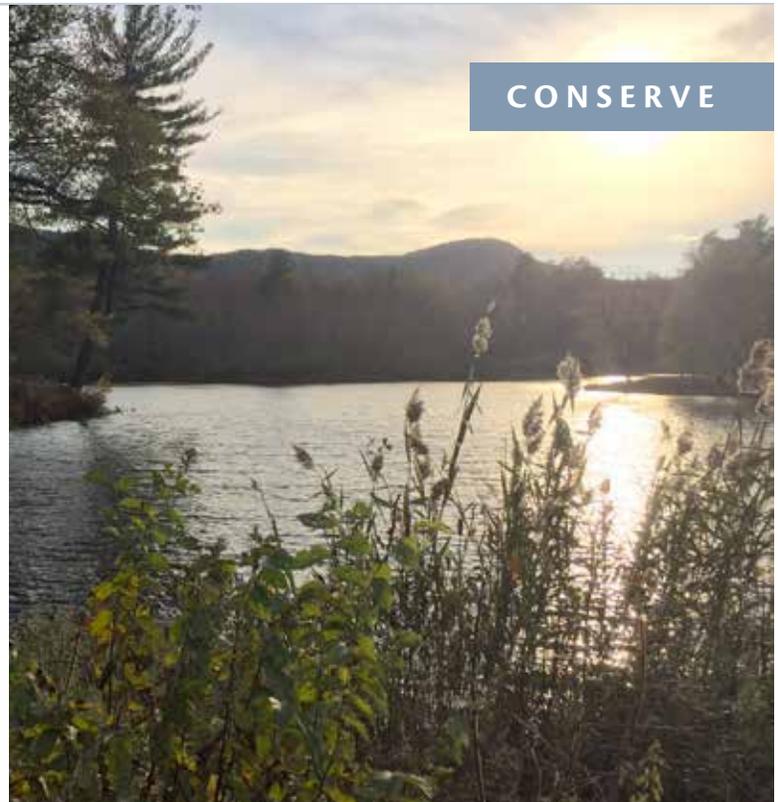
Kestrel now holds a Conservation Restriction on the new town-owned land, which requires a perpetual responsibility for ensuring its proper use. The town’s \$270,000 purchase was made possible through a grant from the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs as well as funding from Amherst Community Preservation Act funds.

Over the next year, new trailheads on Route 116 and on the existing Sweet Alice Conservation Area will be designed, along with an improved trail network and access to the pond for picnics and fishing.

New Mount Tom North Trailhead Park

In Easthampton, Kestrel is working to save a key parcel that will improve public access to the Mount Tom State Reservation and its trails. Nestled beneath Nonotuck Peak, this 23-acre area at the north end of Mount Tom once served as an entrance to the historic Eyrie House resort, and offers picturesque views of Arcadia and the Oxbow.

In partnership with Pascommuck Conservation Trust, Kestrel and the City of Easthampton secured \$380,000 in CPA funds and are waiting for additional state grants to buy the two adjacent properties to create a park that will serve as the



CONSERVE

The expanded Sweet Alice Conservation Area includes a pond and will offer new trailheads on the Mt. Holyoke Range in 2019.

city’s first secure public access to Mount Tom. Long-term plans for the new park include parking on East Street, a universally accessible trail leading to a scenic lookout, a family-friendly loop trail around the Little Mountain Knob, and a trailhead for the National Scenic Trail that also connects with 22 miles of trails on the State Reservation. Input and financial support from the community will be critical for the design and construction of the park.

More Iconic Lands to Protect With Your Help

In 2015, with our partners and donors, Kestrel achieved our goal of conserving more than 1,000 acres on the Mount Holyoke Range. But the 16,000-acre area of Mount Holyoke and Mount Tom Ranges is still only partially protected: 5,000 acres continue to face the risk of development.

With your support, Kestrel will continue to work proactively with towns, the state, and willing landowners to protect this unique area. Projects like these ensure that everyone has the opportunity to enjoy the Mount Holyoke and Mount Tom Ranges: the scenic and recreational heart of the Valley.

Save the Places You Love

Your support is vital to ensure that Kestrel can act quickly to save the places that matter to you.

kestreltrust.org/give/donate



Coming Together for Trails

PHOTO: AARON NORTH, AMC

In August, five Holyoke teens set out on the trails at Mount Tom State Reservation. But they weren't just taking a ramble in the woods: They were part of something bigger.

These students were part of a Teen Trail Crew who were experiencing the outdoors and learning valuable skills doing trail work along the New England National Scenic Trail. Led by Kestrel's partner, the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC), the crew's work this summer was part of an important project that's bringing together a wide range of people to make hiking in the state parks a safer and more enjoyable experience for everyone.

The Mount Holyoke Range State Park and Mount Tom State Reservation are two of the most popular trail systems in the Pioneer Valley. Last year Kestrel Land Trust received a \$50,000 grant to install 80 trail signs throughout the two state parks, a cooperative project with DCR's Recreational Trails Program, which provided the funding. The new durable

signs show trail names, distance, and direction at prominent intersections.

"Accurate and attractive trail signage is one of the most important and cost-effective ways to improve the trail experience," said Paul Jahnige, Director, DCR Greenways and Trails Program. "Our partnership with Kestrel is helping DCR achieve its goal of improving trail signage in two of our most special state parks."

Impact Beyond the Trail

The impact of this project reaches beyond hikers. Kestrel has involved



New trail signs installed at Mount Tom State Reservation will benefit hikers, while also providing hands-on training for teens and other groups.

partners from throughout the community to build a sense of public ownership of this iconic landscape. Local volunteers with knowledge of the trails helped determine sign content and placement, while Smith College students roamed the parks, digitally mapping locations.

Also this summer, AMC's Teen Trail Crew from Holyoke installed 20 signs on Mount Tom on posts that had been set by a Student Conservation Association crew earlier in the season. Bridget Likely, AMC New England National Scenic Trail Coordinator said, "The five teens on our crew all loved learning carpentry skills, and said they enjoyed working together and becoming friends."

Gaining Skills for the Future

To fabricate the signs, another community opportunity emerged. The Hampshire Sheriff's Office had recently launched a project to make sign fabrication part of its vocational rehabilitation program for inmates at the Hampshire County Jail. Several inmate volunteers learned how to use a Computer Numerically Controlled (CNC) machine router to create the signs.

Wallace Hlava, a vocational education instructor at the jail, said the inmates were enthusiastic. "They thought it was pretty cool. When we were fabricating the signs, inmates who were not directly involved gathered around and were fascinated by the process." He noted that this project provides excellent exposure to modern manufacturing, since production in many more industries is now done with CNC machining.

"The project is still in its infancy," Hampshire Sheriff Patrick J. Cahillane said, "but we are hopeful it will grow in the coming months. We see this as an important training program for our inmates that will help them join the workforce when they return to their communities."

In 2019, signage installation will focus on the Mount Holyoke Range with more opportunities for individuals from all walks of life to build practical skills while connecting to their public lands.



"We have chosen to leave a bequest to Kestrel Land Trust in our will because we share Kestrel's mission—to conserve, to care for, and to connect people to the nature of the Pioneer Valley.

We trust Kestrel to ensure that our place on the planet will always be a sanctuary for wildlife and for human communities in this age of climate change."

ROBERT A. JONAS AND MARGARET BULLITT-JONAS

What Will Your Legacy Be?

Create Your Legacy Today

Learn more about opportunities to support land conservation at kestreltrust.org/give/legacy or contact Monica Green at monica@kestreltrust.org or (413) 549-1097.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO LEAVE A LEGACY FOR THE Valley that will help ensure public access to special outdoor places? When you include Kestrel Land Trust in your estate plans you will join others who are making a lasting contribution to land conservation.

Consult your attorney about the best way to leave a legacy for the land. For sample bequest language, as well as suggestions of other types of planned gifts that may provide tax benefits during your lifetime, visit our website or give us a call.

VOLUNTEER VOICES

John Hondrogen



John was instrumental in building a kiosk and gathering platform at the Greenberg Family Conservation Area in Westhampton this year.

MY WIFE, ANN, AND I MOVED TO Pelham over 30 years ago. I've hiked, biked and skied most of the remote areas of Pelham and Amherst. I am grateful to be able walk out my door and be in the woods within five minutes. During my walks, I had regularly seen Kestrel Land Trust signs on the land.

I recently retired from my custom home design/build company after 40 years of rigorous construction work. My health was declining and I was less able to meet the physical demands that full-time construction required. But I still love to build and get out into the woods, so in December of 2017 I decided to reach

out to see if my skills could be helpful to Kestrel.

Working with the stewardship group has been a wonderful experience. Kestrel has a great group of volunteers, and the projects we've completed this year include building a kiosk, split rail fence, and a performance platform with benches. All of these are situated in the woods to be enjoyed by everyone.

Kestrel provided me with an opportunity to combine the work I enjoy with giving back in support of the natural environment. I get so much from being in the woods: I breathe easier and I feel fortified.

Join the Land & Trail Crew! kestreltrust.org/give/volunteer
Become a volunteer to help improve trails and care for the land.



**KESTREL
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conserve the Valley you love!

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Winter Solstice Mindfulness Walk
DEC 20, 5:30 PM, HADLEY

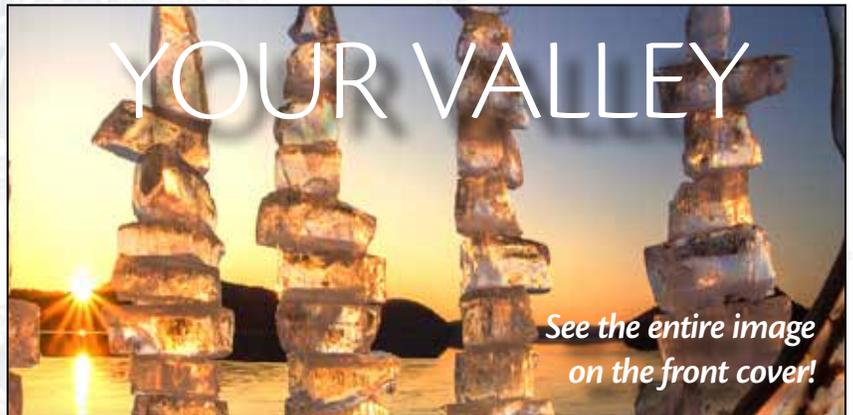
New Year's Day Community Walks
JAN. 1, 1 PM, BELCHERTOWN &
NORTHAMPTON

 kestreltrust.org/calendar

 **Happy Holidays!** 



*Wishing you the peace and
beauty of nature this season.*



*See the entire image
on the front cover!*

COVER ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

Patrick Zephyr

Fire and Ice PHOTOGRAPH

"After a warm rain, the shoreline of the Quabbin Reservoir was littered with beautiful chunks of ice that washed down from the previously frozen streams. I had scouted the location the day before and found the ice chunks. I arrived early the next morning for some creative fun and then waited for the sun to break the horizon for this capture. I have been exploring and photographing wild places in the Pioneer Valley for over 20 years now and feel lucky to be connected to this place I call home."

See more of Patrick's work at patrickzephyrphoto.com.