



MASSACHUSETTS LAND TRUST COALITION

MassLand E-News The Newsletter of the Massachusetts Land Conservation Community

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I hope you're all enjoying these precious summer days! I recently had the pleasure of visiting Sippican Land Trust's beautiful Osprey Marsh in Marion, where they've recently completed an impressive boardwalk and accessible trail. Learn more about the project [here!](#) #OurMassLandTrusts

Robb

Welcome Janet Milkman!

MLTC is pleased to welcome Janet Milkman to our Board of Trustees. Janet has served as Executive Director of Barnstable Land Trust since 2017. She has 30 years of non-profit experience in the areas of smart growth, community development, and energy and environmental policy and practice. She held previous leadership roles with the Marion Institute and the Philadelphia-area Green Building Council and 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania. Janet has a BA from Wesleyan University, a Master in Public Affairs from Princeton University and was a Fulbright Scholar in Germany. Thank you, Janet, for stepping up to share your expertise to benefit the Massachusetts land trust community!

2020-2021 Massachusetts Record Keeping Initiative

MLTC and LTA are collaborating to offer direct assistance to small and all-volunteer land trusts to help strengthen their systems for creating, organizing, and backing up the records needed to defend protected lands in perpetuity. Applications are due September 15, 2020. More information is available [here](#). MLTC and LTA have also collaborated to create a comprehensive Record Keeping Toolkit [webpage](#), with useful resources for any land trust seeking to improve its record keeping practices.

Shoutout to MLTC's First Executive Director

Bernie McHugh didn't get into the outdoors until he married a botanist. Since then, he's been making up for lost time. Bernie has served as a volunteer in a long list of environmental organizations- including serving as Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition's first Executive Director. Now living in Wyoming, he continues to follow his passion for birding and the outdoors. Read more about Bernie in this [article](#) from the Jackson Hole News & Guide.

Save the Date: MLTC Steering Committee Meeting

The next MLTC Steering Committee meeting will be held via Zoom on Wednesday, September 23rd from 10am - 12:15pm. An agenda and registration information will be sent in coming weeks.

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Member Spotlight

Norcross Hill Conservation Site



A conservation partnership in central Massachusetts has ensured the protection of 506 acres of forests, vernal pools, and pastureland on Norcross Hill in Templeton. This regionally significant project provides critical wildlife habitat, including for state-listed American bitterns and eastern whip-poor-wills. The site encompasses three properties that were protected by a partnership of land trusts, land owners, and the state, with support from the MA Landscape Partnership Grant program. MassWildlife purchased 465 acres to create the Norcross Hill Wildlife Management Area, with forests and wetlands now open to the public. DCR purchased an additional 24 acres, and local landowners Jo-Anne and Danny Burdin granted a conservation restriction on 17 acres to North County Land Trust and Mount Grace Land Trust to complete the project. These newly protected properties fill gaps between other conservation areas and are part of over 2,200 contiguous acres of protected lands that include Otter River and Templeton

State Forests. In addition to state agencies, the Town of Templeton, the Fields Pond Foundation, Bafflin Foundation, and the Wharton Trust all contributed to this project. Read more [here](#). Photo Credit: Norm Eggert Photography. #OurMassLandTrusts

Jewell Hill Farm



The Trustees has achieved permanent protection of 296 acres known as Jewell Hill Farm in the towns of Ashby, Ashburnham and the City of Fitchburg, in partnership with the Town of Ashburnham and City of Fitchburg. The farm is an important part of Fitchburg's drinking water supply and has informally been enjoyed by local residents for years. Jewell Hill's natural beauty, sweeping agricultural landscape, and existing forest trails have been well maintained by the Crocker Family for the last four generations. Now permanent protection ensures visitors may always enjoy the property's trails and the stunning views from the summit of Jewell Hill. Conservation of the property was made possible through the generosity of Gus and Alfred Crocker, the estate of Jamie Hudson, and successful efforts of the Town of Ashburnham and the City of Fitchburg to secure state grant funding from the LAND grant and Drinking Water Supply Protection programs. The property served as a dairy farm from World War II until 1987. Today, the property reflects a matrix of both upland forests and fields in hay production, including 40 acres of prime agricultural soils. The property adjoins more than 2,000 acres of protected land in the Fitchburg Watershed.

#OurMassLandTrusts

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Policy

Land and Water Conservation Fund Now Fully Funded

The President has signed the Great American Outdoors Act into law, ensuring that \$900 million from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) will be committed each year to protecting important land, water and recreation areas that benefit all Americans. The LWCF is funded by a small portion of revenues from offshore drilling. As Andrew Bowman, President & CEO of the Land Trust Alliance stated: "This is a bipartisan victory for a bipartisan cause. [The] signing of the Great American Outdoors Act is a reminder of all that's possible when we work as one." Thanks to all the MLTC

members who communicated with Congress in support of this critical legislation!

State Legislative Session Extended

Sourced from MassLive

On July 31 the House and Senate voted to extend formal sessions due to COVID-19. Longstanding rules require formal sessions to end by August of the second year of each two-year session, in part to insulate lawmaking from the political pressures associated with campaign season. As in past years, informal sessions -- where bills can only advance with unanimous agreement -- will continue throughout 2020. But this year, formal sessions will also be allowed through the end of the year to enable continued debate on major bills, especially those that have passed both houses but remain in conference. "It's a changed world," said House Minority Leader Brad Jones, a North Reading Republican. "Everybody agreed to extend the session because it's important."

2050 Roadmap Bill Advances with MLTC-supported Amendments

On July 31, the Massachusetts House of Representatives debated, amended and voted on a significant bill that would move Massachusetts toward a clean and equitable future. The 2050 Roadmap bill establishes the framework for the Commonwealth's response to the climate crisis by adopting the science-based goal of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by mid-century to prevent the worst impacts of climate change. The bill was strengthened through the amendment process, with two amendments in particular supported by MLTC. A Natural Climate Solutions amendment supported by MLTC added language to ensure that preservation of the carbon-storage capacity of natural and working lands is an integral strategy in meeting Net Zero goals. An Environmental Justice amendment supported by MLTC added language to help protect already overburdened communities from more pollution, reduce public health inequities, and ensure that public review processes are accessible and inclusive. An amendment opposed by MLTC was unfortunately also adopted, though late advocacy removed some of its most harmful language. This amendment undercuts the state's recently adopted regulations for solar-siting by making it easier to site solar arrays on farmland. The bill now moves to a conference committee to negotiate differences between the House version and a previously passed Senate version. MLTC hopes to see a strong bill come out of conference and head to the Governor's desk by October.

Public Lands Preservation Act ("Article 97 No Net Loss") Bill Still Pending

On August 14th, lead Sponsor Rep. Ruth Balsler convened a call with advocates including MLTC to discuss strategy and prospects for advancing this bill in the extended legislative session. The Public Lands Preservation Act (S459, H732) would provide enhanced protection for public open space covered by Article 97 of the state constitution. The bill would ensure that whenever lands or easements protected under Article 97 are proposed for conversion to another use, proponents would be required to examine alternatives to the proposed disposition, provide prior notice to the public, and secure Article 97 protection of replacement land of comparable acreage and natural resource value. The Act is currently in the Senate Committee on Ways and Means. MLTC appreciates Rep. Balsler's critical leadership on this issue and will update our membership on opportunities to assist.

Federal Court Protects Migratory Bird Treaty Act

Sourced from National Audubon and Christian Science Monitor.

A federal court has ruled that the legal basis for the Trump Administration's rollback of

the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) is "contrary to the plain meaning of the MBTA." This decision comes as the result of lawsuits filed by environmental organizations and eight states, including Massachusetts. Under the MBTA, both intentional and incidental killing (such as death due to collisions with wind turbines) of protected birds could be prosecuted. This distinction is vital in ensuring protecting threatened birds from industry and development, as well as illegal hunting. The proposed changes to the MBTA would have changed this interpretation so that only intentional harm would be punishable. A huge shoutout to all environmental groups and birders who contributed to this effort, including MLTC board member Rita Gibes Grossman. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

New Mosquito Control Task Force includes MLTC Members

In July, Governor Baker signed into law the final version of the Mosquito Control Reform bill. Thanks to timely action by a number of MLTC members and other advocates, the bill was dramatically improved before passage. This law established the Mosquito Control for the Twenty-First Century Task Force. Advocates hope that Task Force recommendations will lead to a modern mosquito control system that incorporates the most up-to-date science about effective mosquito management and environmental protection. The Task Force includes several scientific experts and representatives from organizations concerned about land conservation, river protection, wildlife protection, agriculture, organic agriculture, and pollinators. MLTC members Mass Audubon, the Trustees, and Mass Rivers Alliance have appointees on the Task Force, the meetings of which must be open to the public. Read more [here](#).

Recommendations on the 2030 Clean Energy and Climate Plan

Major conservation organizations from across the state have offered recommendations to the state on the 2030 Clean Energy and Climate Plan. Mass Audubon, The Trustees, The Nature Conservancy in Massachusetts, Environmental League of Massachusetts, and Appalachian Mountain Club wrote a letter recommending inclusion of natural and working lands in plans to decarbonize Massachusetts. In their letter, they write "the most important actions the Commonwealth can take now regarding natural and working lands are no-regrets actions, such as permanently protecting forest land, avoiding the loss of coastal wetlands, and restoring degraded ecosystems" to protect ecosystems services like carbon storage. Read more [here](#).

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News

The Protective Value of Nature

Sourced from The National Wildlife Federation

The body of research evaluating and quantifying the protective value of nature has grown greatly in the past decades. The National Wildlife Federation's report The Protective Value of Nature summarizes how natural infrastructure offers numerous benefits to society, including mitigation of weather hazards exacerbated by climate change, creating habitat for fish and wildlife, and providing recreational opportunities. Unlike conventional structural approaches for mitigating hazards, healthy, intact ecosystems do not need maintenance, and adapt to disturbances while acting as natural defenses. Read more [here](#).

Citizen Science to Community Science

Sourced from National Audubon

To better engage the public in science and conservation, it is important to create projects that are inclusive to all members of our communities. To reach this goal, Audubon has transitioned from the term "citizen science" to the more inclusive "community science," to ensure that all members of the public, regardless of where they were born or how they came to the US, feel welcomed to participate in conservation work. Those seeking to promote inclusion of all members of our communities in conservation work may also wish to consider reframing the common phrase "in your backyard" to "in your neighborhood," to recognize that not everyone has a backyard. Read more [here](#).

From Bored 2 Board

Sourced from Nonprofit Executives

The networking group Nonprofit Executives has begun a new program called From Bored 2 Board, which is focused on bringing new board members to organizations seeking new talent. From Bored 2 Board will bring together individuals who want to apply their skills on a Board of Directors and organizations seeking new Board Members. Both individuals and organizations can post their qualifications/needs on the From Bored 2 Board website, facilitating outreach and connections. Read more [here](#).

The Merrimack: River at Risk

Sourced from New Hampshire PBS

The Merrimack: River at Risk highlights the unity of interests between watershed associations and land trusts. This film by NHPBS blends the story of the watershed and the water, competing and complementary river uses, and the natural services the river and surrounding forests provide by ensuring water quality and flood protection. Congratulations to the Merrimack and Nashua River Watershed Associations, Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, Greenbelt, and all other organizations associated with the conservation of the Merrimack. This film provides inspiration to watershed associations, land trusts, state agencies, and legislators across Massachusetts. View the film [here](#).

Wildlands Partnership

Sourced from Northeast Wilderness Trust

Wildlands Partnership, a program of the Northeast Wilderness Trust, is seeking land trust partners to advance land conservation across the northeast. With only 3% of the Northeast currently protected as wilderness, a primary goal of this program is to meet the goal of conserving at least 10% of New England's forestland as wilderness by 2060. Land trust partners will receive financial incentives and expertise in wild land conservation. Allowable land uses under these partnerships include scientific study, hunting of prey species, and non-motorized recreation. Read more [here](#).

State Officials Highlight Climate Resilience Efforts

Sourced from Mass.gov, July 17

State and local officials toured the Assawompset Pond flood management project to discuss plans to increase climate resilience in southeastern Massachusetts. With climate change expected to increase flooding, this project would focus on using wetland restoration, fish ladder upgrades and culvert upgrades to control flooding,

improve public safety, and restore habitat for fish and wildlife. This project is a collaboration between the MA Division of Ecological Restoration, NGO technical experts, and a committee of municipal and other stakeholders. Read more [here](#).

First Loon Chick in Southeastern MA in Over a Century

Sourced from Mass.gov, July 9

In early July MassWildlife and the Biodiversity Research Institute (BRI) reported the first common loon chick hatched in southeastern MA in over a century. In 2015, BRI, in partnership with several regional partners, relocated loon chicks from Maine and New York to the Assawompset Pond Complex in Lakeville, MA, where loons historically nested. The hope was that the translocated loon chicks would fledge in the area and return 4 to 6 years later to breed as adults, which is what the translocated male check in Fall River did in 2018, three years after fledging. "It's fitting that this historic event occurred in 2020, which marks the 30th anniversary of the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act," said Andrew Vitz, MassWildlife's State Ornithologist. Nine of the 24 translocated chicks have been observed in the release area forming pair bonds and territories. Read more [here](#).

Land Trust/University Partnership Survey

The Social Ecology Lab at Stanford University is undertaking a study to examine the ways in which land trusts and universities interact. The goal of this study is to understand what makes such partnerships easier to develop and maintain, and what tools may help in supporting them. This short survey should take less than 15 minutes to complete. Read more [here](#).

Tips for Working Remotely

When this blog with helpful tips for non-profits was written back in March, who knew so many of us would still be working from home? Check it out [here](#).

Register to Vote

The deadline to register online to vote in Massachusetts is Saturday, October 24. Don't miss this deadline! Register to vote [here](#), and if you have time consider [volunteering](#) at a polling station this fall.

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Conferences and Meetings

Boston GreenFest

August 20 -- 23

Boston GreenFest 2020 will be completely virtual this year. This festival will include an eco film festival, an eco-fashion show, and the Future Leaders Summit. Learn more [here](#).

LTA Rally 2020

October 6 --8

Rally 2020, the National Land Conservation Conference, will be held virtually this year, and registration is now open. Learn more [here](#).

MACC Fall Conference

October 17-24

This year the Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions conference will be held as a virtual weeklong conference from October 17 - 24, 2020. Learn more [here](#).

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Webinars & e-Learning

The World of Insects: Moths -- Mass Audubon

Thursday, August 27, 7:00pm -- 8:30pm

This course from Mass Audubon will explore the hidden world of insects with an introduction to the moths of New England. In addition to learning about moth biology, the class will cover conservation threats, citizen science programs to conserve insects, and everyday actions to help keep local insects and their habitats healthy. Cost is \$25 for members and \$30 for nonmembers. Register [here](#).

Water Resources Policy and Watershed Management -- Harvard Extension

Thursdays 3:00pm -- 5:00pm beginning September 3

This semester-long online course will address hydrologic science principles and innovative management strategies as they apply to conservation commissions. Topics will include a comprehensive approach to water resources management, policy, and case studies from the US EPA and other organizations. Cost is \$1500 for non credit students. Register [here](#).

Open Space Planning and Protections Techniques - MACC

Tuesday, September 22, 6:00pm -- 8:30pm

This webinar provides an overview of the key tools used to identify conservation priorities and protect open space. Topics include establishing goals and objectives, conducting inventories of natural resources, selecting parcels, working with landowners, establishing conservation restrictions, and securing funding and grants. Cost is \$55 for members and \$75 for non-members. Register [here](#).

Field Notes: A Holistic Guide for the Modern Land Steward -- Ecological Landscape Alliance

Monday, September 28, 12:00pm -- 1:30pm

Trevor Smith, owner of Land Escapes, has taken his 20 years of field experience as a regenerative landscape designer and entrepreneur to create Field Notes, a unique approach to land care. Part professional development, part personal development, Field Notes takes a stripped-down look at the human element in the landscape. Through personal stories and observations, Trevor covers a broad range of topics, including regenerative design, green infrastructure, adaptive strategies in the face of climate change, the importance of maintaining your own health and well being, and ways to challenge the norms in pursuit of authentic results. Cost is \$10. Register [here](#).

Pre-recorded Fundraising & Communications Workshops

The Rhode Island Foundation & van Beuren Charitable Foundation have recordings of a series of fundraising & communications webinars.

[Watch here](#) "How to Speak Well (enough) with your extraordinary Family of Trusting Supporters ... in these Darker Times".

[Watch here](#) "When and How to Raise Funds During and After the Crisis"

[Watch here](#) "Fund Development in Challenging Times"

[Watch here](#) "Pivoting Communications in a time of Crisis"

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Grants

Senior Corps RSVP Competition Notice of Funding Opportunity

Deadline: September 1

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) has released the Fiscal Year 2021 Senior Corps RSVP Competition Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), which intends to fund successful applicants that increase the impact of volunteers age 55 and older. For decades, Senior Corps RSVP has engaged older Americans in volunteer service that meets national and community needs and delivers lasting, meaningful results. Read more [here](#).

Food Security Infrastructure Grant Program -- Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Deadline: September 15

The goal of the Food Security Infrastructure Grant Program is to ensure that individuals and families throughout the Commonwealth have access to food, with a special focus on food that is produced locally. The program also seeks to ensure that farmers, fisherman and other local food producers are better connected to a strong, resilient food system to help mitigate future food supply and distribution disruption. Read more [here](#).

Youth Engagement, Education, and Employment

Deadline: September 15

The National Wildlife Refuge System is accepting proposals for organizations to work cooperatively with the USFWS to develop educational experiences in natural resource careers for young people. Funded programs will enhance conservation stewardship and increase outdoor recreation opportunities while providing hands-on experiences and mentoring. Read more [here](#).

Landscape Scale Restoration -- US Forest Service

Deadline: September 17

The purpose of the Landscape Scale Restoration (LSR) competitive grant program is to encourage collaborative, science-based restoration of priority forest landscapes, leverage public and private resources, and support priorities identified in State Forest Action Plans. This program funds landscape restoration projects. State governments, nonprofits, municipalities and county governments are eligible to apply for grants of up to \$600,000. Read more [here](#).

Partners for Fish and Wildlife

Deadline: September 30

This grant program supports fish and wildlife conservation projects on private lands, including tribal, city, municipal, non-governmental, and private fee-title properties. Eligible projects include restoring trust with local communities, modernizing fish and wildlife infrastructure, conservation projects near National Wildlife Refuge lands, expansion of priority habitats and wildlife corridors, and regional strategic

conservation plans. Awards of up to \$750,000 are available. Please consult with your Regional Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program office before submitting an application. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis through September 30. Read more [here](#).

Regional Conservation Partnership Program -- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Deadline: November 4

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service is making \$360 million available to NGOs, tribes, state and local governments, water districts, and universities through the Regional Conservation Partnership Grant Program (RCPP). This program funds locally driven conservation efforts that improve water quality, support wildlife habitat, enhance soil health, and protect agricultural viability. Eligible projects can receive \$250,000 to \$10 million dollars. Read more [here](#).

Freedom's Way National Heritage Area 2020 Capacity Building Small Grants Program

Deadline: Rolling

Freedom's Way works to preserve and enhance the natural and cultural resources that define its sense of place. It has committed \$20,000 to fund small grants up to \$1,500 for equipment, services and training for non-profits striving to advance their mission during difficult times by: 1) improving remote communications (i.e. virtual meeting or e-newsletter subscriptions, cloud-based software, website upgrades, etc.), or 2) providing alternative means of engaging the public (i.e. video/audio equipment for virtual tours or podcasts, equipment to photograph, scan and digitize collections, etc.). Funds will be dispersed on a reimbursement basis and must be matched at a minimum 1:1 by cash or in-kind contributions. Grants are available to applicable organizations in these Massachusetts towns: Acton, Arlington, Ayer, Ashburnham, Ashby, Bedford, Bolton, Boxborough, Carlisle, Clinton, Concord, Dunstable, Fitchburg, Gardner, Groton, Harvard, Hudson, Lancaster, Leominster, Lexington, Lincoln, Littleton, Lunenburg, Malden, Maynard, Medford, Pepperell, Princeton, Shirley, Sterling, Stow, Sudbury, Townsend, Westford, Westminster, Winchendon, Woburn. Read more [here](#).

MassWildlife Habitat Management Grant Program

The MassWildlife Habitat Management Grant Program provides funds to enhance wildlife habitat and outdoor recreation on public and municipal lands. Funded projects should improve habitat for game species, manage habitat for Species of Greatest Conservation Need, or promote public recreational opportunities. The FY21 grant deadline will be posted soon. Read more [here](#).

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Jobs

[Executive Director](#) -- Harvard Conservation Trust

[Executive Director](#) -- Public Lab

[Executive Director](#) -- MA Association of Conservation Districts

Executive Director -- Manchester Essex Conservation Trust (For more information and a job description please contact Alida Bryant at abryant@mect.org)

[Management Forestry Program Director](#) -- MA Department of Conservation and Recreation

[Agricultural Conservation Program Director](#) -- Vermont Housing & Conservation Board (VT)

[Ecological Restoration Specialist](#) -- MA Division of Ecological Restoration

[Membership and Administration Coordinator](#) -- Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust

[Land Protection Specialist](#) -- Sudbury Valley Trustees

[Land Steward](#) -- Springfield Water and Sewer Commission

[Procurement and Grants Specialist](#) -- MA Division of Ecological Restoration

[Ecological Restoration Specialist](#) -- MA Department of Fish & Game

[Development Associate](#) -- Sudbury Valley Trustees

[Trail Crew Member](#) -- Berkshire Natural Resources Council

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