



Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition

2012 Annual Report

Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition
Sudbury, Massachusetts

The Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition had a productive year in 2012. Land conservation efforts across the state benefitted greatly from the growing number of Coalition programs, as MLTC's member land trusts increasingly tapped into Coalition activities and offerings. MLTC continued to serve as the key statewide land trust forum for educational training, legislative awareness, and land conservation networking – all serving to further the important mission of protecting our state's farms, forests, wildlife habitat, and community parklands.

A Host of Outreach Activities

In 2012, with its newly achieved 501 (c)(3) status in hand, MLTC hired its first executive director, established a permanent home office, and carried out a variety of outreach activities.

Notably, the Coalition:

- Conducted, in collaboration with The Trustees of Reservations, its most well-attended annual Mass Land Conservation Conference to date, with nearly 500 attendees, over thirty exhibitors, and a host of valuable conservation workshops;
- Held four quarterly Steering Committee day-long educational gatherings, each with guest speakers on a host of topics designed to enhance land trust operations;
- Joined with the Washington-based Land Trust Alliance in conducting a needs survey of small, all-volunteer land trusts. This nationwide survey included a special Massachusetts segment, and Mass land trusts demonstrated the highest response rate of any state in the U.S. The final report has served as a springboard for providing assistance to small land trusts;
- Maintained an active web site that includes legislative action alerts, listings of land trust service providers, and many other resources;
- Published a bi-monthly E-news that is now considered a model for state land trust service centers nationwide, an educational outreach tool with over 2,000 readers that is packed with timely information for the conservation community;
- Conducted a special autumn seminar on the effective financial management of land trusts, an educational offering that received high marks by attendees;
- Participated in an event celebrating with the current gubernatorial administration a half-decade of conserving more than 100,000 acres of special Massachusetts lands, protected in no small way by the tireless work of MLTC's land trust members statewide.



Coordinated Fundraising for ROI Study

Another highlight of 2012 was the Coalition's serving as the coordinator of a major fundraising campaign, one designed to gather money to help pay for a special study, one that demonstrates how conserving land in Massachusetts leverages ancillary economic benefits in communities. This "return on investment" study, developed via extensive data analyses by The Trust for Public Land (TPL), required considerable funding. MLTC stepped up to the plate by soliciting donations from its land trust members. Over two dozen trusts made donations, totaling over \$12,000, which MLTC in turn passed along to TPL. The ROI Report will provide valuable talking points for furthering land conservation efforts in their communities as well as in the Massachusetts statehouse.



New Program Crafted to Build Organizational Capacity of Small Land Trusts

In 2012 MLTC also laid the groundwork for a "circuit rider" assistance program for small, all-volunteer land trusts. This program, crafted by MLTC's board and staff, is designed to help small land trusts increase their organizational capacities and enhance their conservation missions through MLTC-facilitated self-assessments. Using the Land Trust Alliance's (LTA's) highly-respected *Land Trust Standards and Practices* as its assessment tool, MLTC staff and trained consultants meet over several months with small land trusts to review these trusts' policies, procedures, and practices, with the goal of determining organizational needs and how best to address them. Working with land trust board members and staff at organizations across Massachusetts, MLTC is optimistic that this approach will well serve our state's land trust community. This new initiative holds much promise, again furthering the Coalition's mission of reaching out to serve our state's land trust community.



From Coastal Headlands... to Berkshire Uplands



As MLTC now looks back at 2012, its Board and staff recognize it as a remarkable year. Significant strides were made on many programmatic fronts, as highlighted above. Further, a financial leap was made as well, as the year witnessed an increase in revenues from a variety of sources. From 2011 to 2012, land trust membership dues swelled by nearly \$2,000, MLTC's annual appeal donations doubled to \$4,000, and annual grant income from foundations jumped from \$19,000 to \$30,000.

In short, in 2012 MLTC further matured as our state's land trust service center while also carrying out a growing number of effective conservation programs. From our state's Atlantic coastal headlands to its Connecticut Valley farmlands to its forested Berkshire uplands, the Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition continued to make remarkable headway along its path toward furthering its mission of serving our state's land conservation community.