



MASSACHUSETTS
LAND TRUST
COALITION

2026 Massachusetts Land Conservation Conference

Workshop Presenter Bios

as of Dec. 30

Presenters volunteered their time and expertise to help further conservation in the Commonwealth. The Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition appreciates their contributions.

[Conference schedule](#) (to date) | [Workshop descriptions](#)

Sponsor Talks

via Zoom

EOEEA | Tuesday, March 3, noon - 1 p.m.

❖ **Introduction to the New EOEEA/DCS Conservation Restriction Tracking System (CRTS)**

- **Sheri Widdis** is the Conservation Restriction (CR) Reviewer for the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) and the Division of Conservation Services (DCS), a role she has held since fall 2022. She is responsible for reviewing hundreds of conservation restrictions across the Commonwealth each year, helping to ensure the long-term protection of vital natural resources. Prior to joining EEA/DCS, Sheri dedicated nearly a decade to public service with the Town of Westborough, where she concluded her tenure as Director of the Conservation Department. Her experience in municipal conservation and her current role at the state level reflect a strong commitment to environmental stewardship, community engagement, and land preservation.
- **Denise Galvao** is the Program Coordinator for the Division of Conservation Services within the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA). In this role, she is an integral member of the Conservation Restriction (CR) Review Team, ensuring that communications are clear and timely and that submissions are thoroughly managed. Denise's dedication and attention to detail contribute meaningfully to the success of the division's conservation efforts.
- **Tom McHugh** is a technology specialist who supports the implementation of the new Conservation Restriction Tracking System (CRTS). In this session, Tom will guide participants through key features of the system, offer practical tips, and answer questions to help ensure a smooth transition and build confidence in using the platform.

The Nature Conservancy in Massachusetts | Thursday, March 5, noon - 1 p.m.

❖ **Saltmarshes: Protecting and Restoring These Vital Land and Seascapes**

- **Richard Cavanaugh** is the Land Protection Manager for The Nature Conservancy in Massachusetts. With a background in land conservation and the local food movement, Rich brings over three decades of experience counseling individuals and nonprofits. Through his law firm, Common Grow, LLC, based in Petersham, Massachusetts, he handled real estate transactions, farm succession planning, business formation, and regulatory compliance. Prior to that, Rich practiced at Gallagher & Cavanaugh, LLP in Lowell, Massachusetts, where he focused on civil litigation and corporate client counseling.
- **Charlie Foster** is the Coastal Program Manager at BSC Group and brings over two decades of experience in coastal ecology, environmental project management, and ecological restoration. He specializes in restoring coastal habitats and developing and implementing resilience measures. Charlie has helped secure millions of dollars in conservation funding for habitat restoration projects across New England, including salt marsh restorations, dam removals, road-stream crossings, working waterfronts, living shorelines, and other nature-based solutions. He led stakeholder engagement and served as principal investigator for a major dam removal project in Maine, helping to restore habitat for endangered Atlantic salmon and other sea-run fish, and has served as senior project manager for multiple salt marsh restoration projects totaling more than 500 acres.

Friday, March 13

10:00 – 11:15 a.m.

8 Concurrent Workshops (1 h 15 m)

Are Websites the Next Payphones? Understanding the Changing Role of Websites

- ❖ **Patrick Williams** (he/him) is the Director of Creative Services at Bold Bison, where he develops creative, innovative, and practical solutions to help nonprofits activate and engage audiences. In his role, Patrick oversees communications strategy, brand development, marketing, and content production services, and helps organizations build a robust suite of tools to elevate their storytelling.
- ❖ **Mitch Sloan** (they/them) is the Digital Media Producer at Bold Bison, where they create accessible, delightful digital experiences for users regardless of how they access the web. Mitch builds websites with a focus on accessibility, usability, and visitor experience.

Beyond Plein Air: Connecting Art and Land Conservation

- ❖ **Jane Rumrill** has a master's degree in education and leads public programming at Greenbelt, where she fosters a sense of wonder and curiosity by pairing science with creative elements such as drawing and painting, writing poetry, storytelling, craft projects, and more. Since 2018, Jane has guided programs including the winter Film & Lecture Series, guided hiking and paddling outings, the Art in the Barn fundraiser, school programs, and collaborative events with local museums, artists, and regional experts in pertinent scientific fields. Her favorite Greenbelt conservation land is Atherton Field in West Newbury, where coyotes and hawks leave lots of cool bones to find.
- ❖ **Jessica Yurwitz** is an artist and educator with over thirty years of teaching and school leadership experience. She holds a Bachelor of Arts from Hampshire College, a Master of Arts in Teaching from Brown University, and Principal Certification from Northeastern University. Jessica began her career teaching middle school art, went on to teach high school English, and eventually became a high school principal. In 2018, she opened Slow River Studio to build a community where adults can develop creative curiosity and build connections. She believes everyone can develop artistic skill with expert instruction and patient coaching and has collaborated with Greenbelt on monthly sketching outings and special outdoor art classes since 2021.
- ❖ **Jenn Houle** is a creative placemaker whose paintings, sculptures, and site-specific installations explore and advocate for the natural world. Her practice is shaped by two decades of teaching, lifelong naturalist curiosity, and motherhood. She holds a BFA from Massachusetts College of Art and an MFA from Cornell University. Houle has held residencies at Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Vermont Studio Center, Artists for the Great Marsh at the Manship Residency, and the PEG Center for Art and Environment. Her grants include the Tufts University Collective Futures Fund, Puffin Foundation, Massachusetts Cultural Council, and Essex County Community Foundation. She teaches at Northern Essex Community College and lives in Merrimac, MA, with her partner, two children, and a cat among a thriving native plant garden.

Team up with your Municipality: DCS Open Space & Recreation Grant Programs

- ❖ **Melissa Cryan** is the Grant Programs Supervisor at the Division of Conservation Services, where she directly administers the PARC, Land and Water Conservation Fund, and Conservation Partnership Grant Programs.
- ❖ **Vanessa Farny** is the Forest & Land Grant Program Manager at the Division of Conservation Services, where she directly manages the LAND, Landscape Partnership, Drinking Water Supply Protection, and Forest Reserves Grant Programs.
- ❖ **Colin Novick** is the Executive Director of the Greater Worcester Land Trust and has successfully partnered with multiple municipalities in his service area on Division of Conservation Services grant applications.

Nipmuc Community Land Project: Carrying Forward Responsibilities to Land and Kinship Beyond Colonial Frameworks

- ❖ **Kimberly Toney (Nipmuc)**, NCLP Board Co-Chair and Clerk, is the Inaugural Coordinating Curator of Native American and Indigenous Collections, jointly appointed at the John Carter Brown and John Hay Libraries at Brown University. Kim regularly serves as a consultant to cultural institutions in southern New England, and her research and personal interests include language and cultural reclamation, the intersections of Black and Indigenous histories, connecting Indigenous knowledge and practices to all scholarly endeavors, and land back.
- ❖ **Andre Strongbearheart Gaines, Jr. (Nipmuc)** is a cultural steward, father, public speaker, traditional dancer, activist, carpenter, and educator. Andre's work focuses on sharing traditional teachings and cultural practices through the lens of cultural revitalization and preservation. He serves as a board member of Native Land Conservancy and is the founder and Creative Director of No Loose Braids.
- ❖ **Jose "Ite" Santana**, known as "Ite," is a Nipmuc leader deeply committed to cultural revitalization, land stewardship, and food sovereignty for the Nipmuc community. Born and raised in Massachusetts, Ite spent 28 years as a Senior Process Engineer in the high-tech industry before dedicating his life to Indigenous advocacy. He now serves as a Land Justice Fellow with Mount Grace Land Trust and holds leadership roles with the Chaubunagungamaug Band of Nipmuck Indians, Nipmuc Cultural Hunt and Fish, and the Nipmuc Community Land Project. Known for blending modern skills with traditional practices, Ite works to restore access to ancestral homelands, strengthen tribal governance, and create sustainable opportunities for future generations of Nipmuc people.
- ❖ **Keely Curliss** is a board member and Treasurer of the Nipmuc Community Land Project. She is a queer farmer, organizer, and mother with more than 15 seasons of experience growing and distributing vegetables, more than 10 years mentoring and working alongside people of all ages on the land, and more than five years saving seed in the Northeast. She has served on the boards of Rooted in Community, a national network of youth food and environmental justice organizations on Turtle Island, and NEFOC, the Northeast Farmers of Color Land Trust. Currently, Keely is working with a small team to build out Pequig Farm, a food sovereignty project by and for Nipmucs located on a 180-acre piece of land rematriated to her community.

Interpretive Messaging: Pathways to Make Your Outreach More Effective

- ❖ **Tom Mullin** is the founder and Principal of Interpretive Pathways, a consulting firm dedicated to assisting the conservation community in finding the intersection of visitor engagement and mission. A former professor of Parks and Forest Resources at Unity College, he has served as Executive Director at five environmental nonprofits and serves on the boards of numerous statewide and national conservation organizations.

Ecological Stewardship: Now that it's protected, how should it be managed?

- ❖ **Bill Giezentanner** is a Conservation Planner with more than 30 years of experience in the ecological management of natural areas. After teaching landscape architecture and planning at Harvard, he served for 15 years as Mass Audubon's Director of Planning and was a co-founder of the Mass Audubon Ecological Extension Service, where he served as Coordinator from 2018 to 2025. He continues to advise conservation commissions and land trusts on stewardship of their lands as a Senior Associate at the Collaborative, a full-service planning and landscape consulting firm in Boston. Bill also serves on the board of the Wellesley Conservation Land Trust and is an expert in trail and boardwalk design and construction.
- ❖ **Pete Westover** is formerly the Conservation Director for the Town of Amherst and founded Conservation Works in 2005 with Terry Blunt. He is a frequent adjunct professor of ecology at Hampshire College and a contractor for the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources. He serves on the board of the Conservation Law Foundation, is Board President of Just Roots/Greenfield Community Farm, and is a board member of Pine Mountain Settlement School in Harlan County, Kentucky. He is a co-founder of the Valley Land Fund and the Massachusetts Society of Municipal Conservation Professionals and has provided long-term advisory support to the Kestrel Land Trust. Conservation Works is a conservation consulting firm with extensive expertise in land management, land protection, biological services, land use and open space planning, resource protection zoning, trail system development, mapping and photo-documentation, and cooperative projects with Indigenous peoples.

Connecting Land and Water: Regional Collaboration for Conservation and Climate Resilience

- ❖ **Leah Farr** joined the Housatonic Valley Association (HVA) in late summer 2024 and brings over a decade of experience in conservation management. She earned a dual bachelor's degree in Natural Resources and Sustainability from Oregon State University and has more than 10 years of hands-on experience in natural resource management. Lea spent 8.5 years as a park ranger, focusing on conservation, land stewardship, and community engagement, and then transitioned to a field ecologist role specializing in stream and wetland mitigation and restoration for 1.5 years. She continues her dedication to environmental restoration and climate resiliency with HVA.
- ❖ **Erin Rodgers** joined Trout Unlimited's New England Culvert Project as an intern in 2011 and now leads habitat restoration and connectivity work in Vermont and Massachusetts. She focuses on the connections between healthy coldwater stream ecology and reducing flood impacts by increasing connectivity, reconnecting floodplains, and adding large woody habitat. Erin works with private landowners, towns, and state and federal agencies to improve coldwater fisheries using nature-based solutions, pilot new restoration methods, and extensively monitor project sites. She and her team average three to five construction projects and more than 10 miles of in-stream woody habitat across New England each year.
- ❖ **Marisa Browning** has worked in environmental outreach, wildlife conservation, and land management since 2010. She is the Senior Land Protection and Restoration Associate at the

Nashua River Watershed Association, where she leads the Marion Stoddart Greenway Program to expand, promote, and permanently protect greenways along rivers, streams, and wetlands across the Nashua River watershed. Marisa holds a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Studies and Visual Arts from Bowdoin College and a Master's degree in Environmental Conservation from the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

- ❖ **Anna Wilkins** has served in a variety of conservation roles in Massachusetts since 2004. She is currently the Director of Conservation and Climate at North County Land Trust. Anna holds a degree in Ecology and Natural Resource Management from Sterling College, Vermont, and uses her decades of experience in land stewardship, community outreach, conservation projects, and nonprofit management to advance land protection.

An Intro to Best Land Trust Practices and Terraforma Insurance

- ❖ **Tom Kester** is the Operations Manager at Alliance Risk Management Services LLC (Terraforma's manager), where he is responsible for the day-to-day operations of Terraforma. He previously worked as assistant general counsel for a large U.S. health care insurer, as a staff attorney for Vermont's Medicaid and Affordable Care Act programs, and as an associate in a private practice firm focusing on real property matters and general civil litigation. Tom earned his J.D. from Vermont Law School and his B.A. in Government from Franklin & Marshall College. He is an actively licensed Vermont attorney and lives with his wife in central Vermont.
- ❖ **Mariah Fogg** is the New England Program Coordinator at the Land Trust Alliance, bringing over ten years of experience in conservation and community engagement. In this role, she helps deliver programs that strengthen land trusts throughout the region by connecting them to technical assistance, training opportunities, grants, and peer learning. She also plays a vital role in fostering relationships with conservation partners. In addition, Mariah serves as President of the Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition's Early Conservation Career Network, where she helps coordinate its mentor program. She holds a B.S. in Environmental Studies from UNC Asheville and an M.S. in Wildlife Conservation and Management from Unity College.

11:35 – 12:50 p.m.

8 Concurrent Workshops (1 hr 15 min)

Appreciating Members: Membership Programs for Land Trusts of All Sizes

- ❖ **Charlotte Hand Greeson** is the Development and Communications Coordinator at WLCT. Under the umbrella of engagement, Charlotte is responsible for direct and digital appeals for Membership and the Annual Fund, creating fundraising materials for land preservation projects, and designing and editing WLCT's monthly digital communications. Westport Land Conservation Trust's high-touch approach to fundraising has raised over \$2.5 million in private funds and successfully conserved 360 acres in the past 2.5 years. Since early 2024, WLCT has successfully reengaged constituents through digital communications. Member Appreciation Programs are designed to continue that level of engagement with financial supporters at all levels.
- ❖ **Rachel Horgan** is the Director of Development and Community Engagement at Greenbelt and has been with the organization since 2017. With a background in sales, marketing, and

relationship building, Rachel oversees the fundraising and engagement team, working to advance the Annual Fund, Membership, and Corporate Sponsorship programs, and leading private fundraising efforts for land campaigns. Greenbelt's engagement- and outreach-driven approach to fundraising has resulted in increased membership donors, growing annual fund support, and the successful raising of funds for land campaigns across Essex County.

Re-examining Your Mission, Vision & Values as the Building Blocks to Strategic Planning

- ❖ **Jennifer Plowden** was most recently the New England Senior Program Manager at the Land Trust Alliance, where she oversaw program and service delivery to more than 250 land trusts. She built relationships with land trust practitioners, partners, donors, and funders to understand and respond to the pressing needs of the community. Her work centered on fostering a culture of connection among land trust practitioners, building the capacity of land trusts, and ensuring the protection of essential lands. Jennifer previously led research on the economics of land conservation, parks, and trails at the Trust for Public Land, served on the board of the Orono Land Trust, and worked in membership and development roles at Blue Hill Heritage Trust.
- ❖ **Karen Grey** has served as President of Wildlands Trust since 2007, where she works at the intersection of land conservation and community engagement. Under her leadership, Wildlands Trust has significantly grown its protected lands, operating budget, endowment, staff, and programming. In addition to her role at Wildlands, Karen is deeply committed to the community and has served as Vice President of the Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition, Vice President of the South Shore Economic Development Council, and as a board member of Historic O'Neil Farm in Duxbury. She began her conservation career at Manomet Conservation Sciences, where she held several senior leadership positions during her 17-year tenure.

Troubleshooting Land Conservation Transactions

- ❖ **David Santomenna** has been active in land conservation in Massachusetts for more than 25 years at the regional and statewide level. He currently serves as Mass Audubon's Senior Director of Land Conservation.
- ❖ **Jennifer Dubois** is the Vice President of Land Conservation at The Trustees of Reservations, where she has served in a variety of positions over more than 10 years with the organization. She previously served as Interim Executive Director and Director of Special Projects at the Westport Land Conservation Trust and worked for The Nature Conservancy.
- ❖ **Miranda Siemasko** is a partner at the firm of Glovsky & Glovsky in Beverly. She was previously affiliated with Hemenway & Barnes and Choate Hall & Stewart and also served as a Beverly City Councilor. Miranda is a graduate of Dartmouth College (B.A.) and Boston College Law School.

Incorporating a Farm Viability Approach into Farm Conservation

- ❖ **Jamie Pottern** works across New England to address land access barriers for farmers, protect farmland, and support conservation organizations and communities. She is the co-author of *AFT's Farms Under Threat: A New England Perspective*, which analyzes threats and opportunities for a more resilient and justice-driven agricultural system in New England. Before joining AFT, Jamie managed the Farm Conservation Program at Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust and served as the Land, Community, and Education Director at Agrarian Trust. She holds a Master's degree in Sustainable Landscape Planning and Design from The Conway School, a B.A. in Environmental Studies and International and Global Studies from Brandeis University, and a certificate from The Farm School's Learn to Farm Program.
- ❖ **Benneth Phelps** is the Executive Director of The Carrot Project. She previously worked as Director of Farmer Services at Dirt Capital Partners for seven years, where she partnered with major land trusts across the Northeast on conservation transactions and helped shape the organization's approach to investing in farmland and farms. In addition to her experience helping farmers execute business plans, secure farmland, and access capital, Benneth holds a Master's degree in Regional Planning from the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Before joining The Carrot Project, she farmed in the Connecticut River Valley of Western Massachusetts for nearly a decade.
- ❖ **Vanessa Johnson-Hall** brings over 20 years of experience in land conservation to her role as Director of Land Conservation at Greenbelt, along with a strong passion for working with people to preserve land. After participating in conservation efforts focused on Coho salmon in Oregon and grizzly bears in Montana, Vanessa began her land trust career in Napa, California. Following a break to teach English in Ecuador, she returned to her home state of Massachusetts in 2007. Vanessa enjoys visiting and eating from local farm stands, kayaking, trail running, cross-country skiing, bicycling, and hiking mountains near and far.
- ❖ **Kathleen Doherty** (she/her) is the Farmland Easement Support Specialist at the American Farmland Trust. She works across Massachusetts to increase the pace of farmland protection by helping the conservation community navigate the ACEP-ALE program and other farmland protection tools. In this role, Kathleen recently authored *Massachusetts Farmland Protection Options: A Guide for Landowners, Land Trusts, and Municipalities*. She holds a Master's degree in Regional Planning from UMass Amherst and is a TerraCorps alum. Before joining AFT, Kathleen spent six years directing the farmland conservation and stewardship program at Connecticut Farmland Trust.

Community Biodiversity Initiative: Document Species, Protect Land

- ❖ **Dave Fryxell** is the Executive Director of the Dennis Conservation Land Trust (DCLT) on Cape Cod and a Research Scientist with UConn's Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. He earned a Ph.D. in Ecology from the University of California, Santa Cruz, and completed a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Auckland's School of Environment. During his three years leading DCLT, he has focused on engaging students and volunteers in all aspects of the organization's conservation mission, including a research program on the ecology and conservation of wetlands, ponds, and vernal pools.

- ❖ **Nellie Wilson** is a volunteer with Hilltown Land Trust (HLT) and chairs its Vernal Pool Program Committee. She trained in 2019 in vernal pool data collection and submission to the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) through the “Vernal Pool Plunge,” which was then offered by Wild & Scenic Westfield River and later inherited by Hilltown Land Trust. Nellie has experience leading vernal pool field trips, assisting with trainings, and demonstrating how community science opportunities can make a difference for vulnerable ecosystems.

Trails for All Initiative: Expanding Accessibility in Natural Areas

- ❖ **Paul Jahnige** is the Director of the Massachusetts Office of Outdoor Recreation (MOOR), which is dedicated to expanding outdoor recreation and making Massachusetts one of the most welcoming, inclusive, diverse, and accessible places to play outside. Prior to his role at MOOR, Paul spent 17 years on the Department of Conservation and Recreation’s Trails and Greenways team, planning, maintaining, repairing, and building trails across Massachusetts.
- ❖ **Peter Flinker** is a registered Landscape Architect and a Fellow of both the American Society of Landscape Architects and the American Institute of Certified Planners. As President of Dodson & Flinker, Landscape Architects and Planners, he maintains an active portfolio of projects with public and private clients, including the design of new communities, downtown revitalization, conservation-based residential development, and sustainable design for schools and other public facilities. He has worked with numerous state agencies, municipalities, and land trusts on planning for conservation, regional greenways, and trail systems, and has helped design and build trails from Great Blue Hill to Mount Greylock.
- ❖ **Amy Sugihara** moved to Northampton with her family in 2021 and, after living around the country, is happy to call the area home. She has worked in outdoor therapeutic settings and as a school counselor, and now sells her handcrafted organic body care products at local farmers’ markets and gift stores. Amy is Chair of the Northampton Disability Commission and has served on the board of Friends of Northampton Trails. As an outdoor enthusiast and a recent wheelchair user, she is exploring ways to access the outdoors using various mobility devices and brings her enthusiasm for trail access for all people to her work with the Trail Access Working Group.

Exploring Options for Forest Management for Biodiversity and Climate

- ❖ **Tom Lautzenheiser** is responsible for ecological management planning for Mass Audubon lands west of Route 495, working across the spectrum of passive to active management approaches. He has implemented several forest management projects over the past decade.
- ❖ **Julie Richburg** works statewide for The Trustees on habitat management focused on grassland, forest, and riparian areas. She has been implementing a climate-adaptive forest management project at Notchview.
- ❖ **Andrew Randazzo** is a forest ecologist and Massachusetts licensed forester working on Mass Audubon’s climate-smart forest team. His focus is the development and adoption of climate adaptation practices within the forest management community.

Talking Dirty: Contaminated Properties and Land Protection

- ❖ **Brad Buschur** is the Executive Director of Groundwork Lawrence, a nonprofit committed to environmental justice, urban greening, land restoration, and community revitalization in Lawrence, MA. He leads strategic planning, program development, and community-based land use and environmental initiatives. Under his leadership, Groundwork Lawrence partners with municipal, state, and nonprofit stakeholders to expand green infrastructure, rehabilitate urban land, and foster equitable access to healthy environments.
- ❖ **David Foss** is the Statewide Brownfields Coordinator with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection's Bureau of Waste Site Cleanup. He brings more than 25 years of experience in environmental assessment, remediation, and brownfield redevelopment across Massachusetts. David is a Certified Professional Geologist (CPG) and Licensed Site Professional (LSP) who has worked with municipalities, state and federal partners, and community stakeholders to advance assessment and safe reuse of contaminated properties. His work focuses on helping communities navigate regulatory requirements while advancing land revitalization and environmental protection.
- ❖ **Joe Spencer** is an environmental consultant with Weston & Sampson, where he works on contaminated site assessment, remediation planning, and regulatory compliance for public and private clients. His work supports municipalities, landowners, and conservation organizations navigating environmental due diligence and cleanup requirements for properties with complex site histories. Joe brings hands-on experience working within Massachusetts' regulatory framework to advance practical solutions for site reuse and land protection. His professional focus is on translating technical site conditions into clear, actionable pathways toward remediation and long-term stewardship.
- ❖ **Lorraine Byrne** is a Brownfields Project Officer with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 1, supporting communities across New England through the EPA Brownfields Program. In this role, she manages and coordinates Targeted Brownfields Assessments and cleanup grant assistance to help communities assess, plan for, and remediate contaminated properties. Lorraine works closely with municipalities, nonprofits, and state partners to advance community-driven redevelopment and equitable land reuse. Her work emphasizes collaboration, regulatory coordination, and supporting local capacity to move complex sites toward productive reuse.
- ❖ **Vidya Tikku** is the Vice President, Urban Outdoors at The Trustees of Reservations. She has been with the Trustees since 2005. Prior to her current position, Vidya worked as the Vice President at Boston Natural Areas Network, the Neighborhood Parks Council in San Francisco and as a practicing architect in India. She holds a Master's degree in Architecture & Urban Design from Washington University and a Certificate in Environmental Policy and International Development from Harvard Extension School. She has served as Board Chair at the New England Grassroots Environment Fund and a Board member at the Northeast Organic Farming Association, Massachusetts chapter.

Keynote Presentation: Nature and Health — a Pediatrician's Perspective

- ❖ **Pooja Sarin Tandon**, MD, MPH, is the Health Director at the Trust for Public Land, where she advances work at the intersection of public health, parks, and outdoor recreation. She is a general pediatrician and health researcher, as well as an Associate Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Washington School of Medicine. Pooja's work focuses on improving health equity, promoting access to nature and physical activity, and understanding the impacts of nature contact on children's health. You can view her full bio [here](#).

Making Better Trail Maps with the Tools You Have

- ❖ **Sarah Welch** is the Community Engagement Manager at Hilltown Land Trust, where she helps people connect to the rural woods of western Massachusetts through education, communications, and design. A lifelong cartography enthusiast, she believes that clear, accessible trail maps can foster a sense of belonging for everyone who visits conserved lands. She currently leads an ongoing trail map overhaul at her land trust, drawing on her environmental education background from Antioch University as well as GIS and graphic design training. Sarah also teaches cartography within her community, training members of local trails organizations in mapmaking best practices.

Nooswetamooonk: Our Duty to Care for the Land Together

- ❖ **Pamela Ellis** (Nipmuc) is retired from the practice of law in Massachusetts and now serves as the Principal and Owner of Chagwás Cultural Resource Consultants, LLC. She is an advocate for Aboriginal rights and Indigenous land stewardship. She holds a JD and a certificate in Federal Indian Law from the ASU College of Law. Pam served as a member of the Board of Directors of the Native Land Conservancy in Mashpee from 2012 to 2024 and is currently a board member of the Nipmuc Community Land Project.
- ❖ **Andre Strongbearheart Gaines, Jr.** (Nipmuc) is the Creative Director of No Loose Braids, a Nipmuc-led organization working to bring Eastern Woodland Tribal communities together through the cultural revitalization of traditional practices to revive community and culture. He creates spaces for Indigenous people to step out of fractured, colonized ways of thinking and reconnect with ancestral knowledge, strengthen bonds of reciprocity, and restore balance. Andre advocates for Tribal rights through engagement and dialogue in colonial spaces and serves as a board member of Native Land Conservancy and the Nipmuc Community Land Project.

- ❖ **Jennifer Albertine** is the Climate and Land Justice Director at the Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust. Before joining the land trust in 2021, she spent two decades in academia teaching and researching environmental issues through a social justice lens and holds a PhD in this field. She is committed to changing the trajectory of conservation to recenter and return land stewardship to Indigenous people who have stewarded this land for millennia.
- ❖ **Additional partners / co-presenters:**
 - **Andrew Randazzo**, Licensed Forester and Forest Biologist at Mass Audubon
 - **Toni Uliana**, Conservation Agent for the Town of Monson, MA
 - **Matt DiBona**, Director of Land Stewardship at Mount Grace Land Trust
 - **Mike Mauri**, Licensed Forester

Fundraising Made Simple: A Guide for Land Trust Board Members

- ❖ **Liz Albert** served as Mass Audubon's Development Director for Land Campaigns and Statewide Initiatives for fifteen years, where she closed more than 25 capital campaigns. She now works as a fundraising consultant and coach with nonprofits across the country, focusing on individual giving, capital campaigns, fundraising strategy, and board training. She is particularly passionate about helping organizations tell their story and authentically connect with donors.

Getting Your Foot in the Door: Landowner Outreach and Project Generation

- ❖ **Nick Rossi** is a Land Protection Specialist in the Connecticut Valley region for the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. He has a combined ten years of experience in land conservation, working on land protection projects and conservation restriction stewardship for both state agencies and land trusts.
- ❖ **Lee Halasz** is a Conservation Manager at Kestrel Land Trust, where he works on land protection projects in the Connecticut River Valley of Western Massachusetts. Earlier in his career in Australia, he held a variety of environment-related roles with organizations including an herbarium, state government, a nonprofit consultant, and a university. Over the past decade, Lee completed three TerraCorps (AmeriCorps) terms at Kestrel before earning dual master's degrees at UMass Amherst in Regional Planning and Science (wildlife ecology and land management) and returning to Kestrel in his current role.

Coalition Building: Advancing the Aims of Urban Agriculture

- ❖ **Abby Hardy-Moss** is the Vice President of Stewardship, Planning, and Technology at Greenbelt. She uses geospatial technology to connect people to nature and embed science into Greenbelt's conservation work. Notable projects she has managed include the GreenbeltGo app, the Conservation Prioritization Initiative, and Greenbelt's Guidebook maps. Conservation planning is a particular interest of hers, and she leads Greenbelt's efforts to partner with municipalities and nonprofits on open space mapping as well as the organization's climate resilience planning work. Abby holds a master's degree in Environmental Policy and Planning from Tufts University and a bachelor's degree in Communication from Emerson College. She has been a visiting instructor of GIS at Salem State University and founded Greenbelt's collaborative internship program with Salem State University in 2013.

2026 Massachusetts Land Conservation Conference: Speaker Bios

- ❖ **Brett Otis** is the Coordinator of the North Shore Farm and Food Coalition, a collaboration among food, farming, educational, and municipal partners working to identify and develop regional opportunities that expand food production capacity and increase local food security. He serves in this role through his affiliation with the sustainability nonprofit Green Beverly. Professionally, Brett is also a Communications Project Manager in the Department of Nutrition at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, where he provides strategic support to initiatives at the intersection of human and planetary health. He holds a bachelor's degree in Multimedia Journalism with a specialty in health communication and a master's degree in Sustainability with a focus on food systems and healthy communities.
- ❖ **Becca Smalley** brings her geographic, analytical, and technical skills to support all of Greenbelt's departments and core mission. She creates maps and web map applications, helps maintain and update Greenbelt's database, and contributes to projects such as Greenbelt's Prioritization Project and the GreenbeltGo Trails app. Becca is passionate about the environment and is a long-term resident of Essex County, where she is excited to apply her GIS skills in service of land conservation in her home region. When she is not making maps or performing geospatial analyses, she enjoys fishing from her Old Town kayak, traveling, and photographing wildlife and natural landscapes with her camera and drone. She holds a bachelor's degree in Cartography and a master's degree in Geo-Information Science from Salem State University.

Conservation Restriction Stewardship Roundtable

- ❖ **Sally Naser** is the Conservation Restriction Stewardship Director at The Trustees of Reservations. She manages The Trustees' portfolio of more than 400 conservation restriction (CR) properties across Massachusetts, which protect over 20,000 acres of land. Sally has been an avid wildlife camera trapper since 2013, deploying remotely triggered cameras on CR properties in western and central Massachusetts to inspire and educate landowners about the importance of protecting and preserving wildlife habitat. She previously served as Boundary Program Manager for the Appalachian Trail in partnership with the National Park Service and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. Sally earned her master's degree in Sustainable Landscape Planning and Design from The Conway School in 1998.
- ❖ **Andrew Bentley** joined the New England Forestry Foundation (NEFF) in July 2017 as Conservation Easement Manager and became Conservation Easement Director in spring 2022. He oversees nearly 160 easements protecting more than 1.1 million acres of mostly private forestland. Prior to joining NEFF, Andrew worked for seven years in the Conservation Restriction Stewardship program at The Trustees of Reservations as part of a team responsible for stewarding more than 400 Massachusetts easement properties. Andrew studied Regional Planning at UMass Amherst, with a focus on land use and natural resources conservation.

Tips for Recruiting and Retaining a Strong Stewardship Volunteer Corps

- ❖ **Kelly Barber** has served with Barnstable Land Trust since 2019. During that time, she has played a key role in building the organization's volunteer stewardship program through regular and unique projects, volunteer trainings, and appreciation gatherings. As a result, the stewardship corps has grown from 13 stewards to more than 70, and the stewardship committee has become a model for a strategic, high-functioning committee within the organization. Kelly draws on her previous experience in AmeriCorps and other volunteer engagement roles, as well as continued networking and learning, to guide strategies for volunteer corps growth and retention.
- ❖ **Owen Grey** began working at Wildlands Trust as a seasonal land steward in 2010 and joined the team full time in 2017. Over that period, he has witnessed the Wildlands Trust volunteer program evolve from a small group of committed trail stewards to more than 150 volunteers with diverse backgrounds, interests, and levels of commitment. The Wildlands Trust Stewardship Committee has been central to this growth and is treated as an extension of staff, with members featured among staff bios and participating in staff meetings. Owen and the rest of the Wildlands stewardship department take a broad approach to volunteer work, providing opportunities for volunteers not only to accomplish important work, but also to socialize, learn, be heard, stay active, and enjoy their time on the land.

Conservation Legal Roundtable

- ❖ **Elizabeth Wroblecka** is a Senior Land Protection Specialist at The Trustees of Reservations, where she focuses on protecting critical forest and farmland. She formerly practiced law, specializing in land conservation, environmental justice, real estate, land use, estate planning, and litigation. Elizabeth has worked as a staff member at the Land Trust Alliance, Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust, Napa Valley Land Trust, and the Pacific Forest Watershed Lands Stewardship Council, and served as Chief of Wildlife Lands for the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife. She currently serves on the boards of The Norcross Wildlife Foundation and the Land Trust Alliance's Conservation Defense Advisory Council. Her prior board service includes Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture and the Northampton Zoning Board of Appeals and Conservation Commission.
- ❖ **Jennifer Dubois** is the Vice President of Land Conservation at The Trustees of Reservations, a Massachusetts-based conservation organization, where she leads the statewide land conservation program and oversees the conservation restriction stewardship program. She has dedicated her career to land conservation, working with land trusts in a variety of roles to conserve land and manage fundraising campaigns. Prior to joining The Trustees, Jennifer worked as a consultant and held positions at the Westport Land Conservation Trust and The Nature Conservancy.