



MASSACHUSETTS  
LAND TRUST  
COALITION

## 2024 Massachusetts Land Conservation Conference

### Session & Field Trip Descriptions

as of Feb. 20

[Schedule](#) Jump to: [9:00 a.m. sessions](#) / [10:35 a.m. sessions](#) / [Keynote](#) / [2:15 p.m. sessions](#) / [field trips](#)

#### **Sponsor Talks**

Various dates, via Zoom

Wednesday, March 13 | noon – 1 00 p.m.

Managing New England Forests Threatened By Emerald Ash Borer / Paul Catanzaro (UMass Extension / MassWoods)

Thursday, March 14 | noon – 1:00 p.m.

Stewardship Strategies – How We Prioritize, Plan For, and Resource Our Property Care / Fran Blanchard (The Trustees) and Ross Moran (Westport Land Conservation Trust)

Tuesday, March 19 | 4 - 5 p.m.

An Integrated Approach to Land Use, Conservation & Climate / Stephanie Cooper (EOEEA), Amy Sheldon (Vermont State Representative), Mark Wamsley (Kestrel Land Trust), David Foster (Wildlands and Woodlands) with moderator Liz Thompson, Wildlands, Woodlands, Farmlands & Communities

Wednesday, March 20 | 4:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Conserving Healthy Rivers & Lands in Massachusetts: TNC Goals for 2030 / Barbara Charry and Rich Cavanaugh (The Nature Conservancy in Massachusetts)

#### **Saturday, March 23**

In-person at UMass Amherst Campus Center, 1 Campus Center Way, Amherst.  
Exhibits will be open all day.

#### **9:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. Concurrent Sessions**

##### **Stewardship Tips and Trends from Terrafirma**

*Brendan Annett, Gabriel Martinez*

Terrafirma Risk Retention Group LLC is a unique charitable risk pool for conservation organizations that helps its members uphold the promise of lasting conservation. This presentation will provide a high-level overview of: • Terrafirma’s history, structure, benefits, costs,

and coverage, • data and analysis from TerraFirma's 220+ covered claims, and • selected cases and data trends relevant for MA land trusts. It will highlight stewardship tips and trends. Participants will take away information that they can use to help reduce disputes, know common issues affecting conserved properties, and understand how TerraFirma can benefit their land trust's risk management strategy.

### **Diversify Your Data – New Perspectives in Conservation Planning**

*Abby Hardy-Moss and Rebecca Smalley*

Massachusetts communities are facing a host of issues that land conservation practitioners should be considering in their projects. Climate impacts, environmental justice concerns, and drinking water protection all have a relationship to land use that conservation can impact. There are publicly available GIS datasets related to all of these topics. In this workshop we will demonstrate how to utilize these data in project review, prioritization, and fundraising. We will include case studies, which will include project details and fundraising examples.

### **Terrestrial and Marine Cultural Resource Management for Land Managers**

*Jonathan Patton, David Robinson*

This workshop is for property managers interested in navigating the multiple flows of cultural resource identification and management, including applicable laws, regulations, and best management practices in Massachusetts archaeology and historic preservation. Land and water intersections will be mobilized to inform on basic archaeological and historic preservation theory and method, including brief discussions of relevant federal, tribal, state, and local environmental review processes. The workshop is intended to answer basic cultural resource questions: Who, What, When, Where & Why.

### **Planned Giving 101: Strategies for All Land Trusts**

*Jennifer Dubois, Julie Lazarus, Kelly Guarino*

Planned giving is an important tool in a land trust's toolbox. It can help land trusts conserve more land and support your organization's financial sustainability. This workshop will provide strategies, information, and tips for land trusts of all sizes to start or grow your planned giving program. Participants will learn about planned giving success stories, land conservation achieved through planned gifts, and the donor's perspective and considerations. There will be ample opportunity for discussion and questions.

### **Recalibrating Forest Stewardship with Climate & Justice Priorities**

*Andre StrongBearHeart Gaines Jr., Andrew Randazzo, Andrew Fitch with Lisa Hayden, moderator*

As we tackle the climate crisis through our conservation work, how can we make progress towards building justice and equity within the human communities we serve? This session will share examples of what we're learning from the Woodlands Partnership of Northwest Massachusetts, a fledgling collaboration with a big vision, that has set out on this path. Multiple partners are collaborating in this landscape to build vital ingredients into our work implementing natural climate solutions – among them benefits to the atmosphere, inclusion of people who haven't been at the table in the past, and the building of lasting relationships to expand work at multiple scales. Discussion will focus on efforts to invite Indigenous participation and perspectives, supporting Indigenous-led land stewardship as part of our work in climate-smart forestry, and strengthening local wood markets to sustain rural livelihoods and work towards an equitable future.

### **Hosting a TerraCorps Member at Small Land Trusts**

*Elise Leduc-Fleming, Sally Loomis, Sean Pollock*

This workshop will delve into how all-volunteer land trusts and land trusts with very few staff can effectively participate in, and benefit from, the TerraCorps program. From the program side, TerraCorps Chief Operating Officer Sean Pollock will demystify the application process, explain the responsibilities of host sites, and share program considerations for onboarding a smaller organization. From the land trust side, Executive Directors from two small land trusts, Elise Leduc-Fleming from the Wareham Land Trust and Sally Loomis from Hilltown Land Trust, will share their experiences hosting TerraCorps service members, highlight the capacity building achieved by participating in the program, and list some of the pros and cons of serving as a TerraCorps host site.

### **Case Studies on Improving Land Access for Underserved Communities**

*Kari Blood, Kevin Essington, Mark Wamsley*

Land trusts want to do better at connecting underserved communities with the outdoors, but how can your land trust make these connections? The climate crisis and an increasingly diverse and urbanized populace mean that connecting people to nature and sustainability practices has never been more important. Research of successful people and nature initiatives from around the country reveal some best practices: humility, side-to-side power relationships, the power of small, and more. This workshop will explore examples of how conservation groups from around the country have reached underserved and BIPOC groups through both land conservation projects and community engagement programs. Kevin Essington of City Greener Strategies will share his research of initiatives nationally, and Kestrel Land Trust will present some examples of their own work. Kestrel's efforts include partnering with a city to restore an urban park, helping immigrant farmers find land, and leading nature programs with youth-serving non-profits. Together they will lead a discussion with participants about their experiences.

### **Working with AllTrails to Improve Public Use of Conserved Properties**

*Ian Bergemann, John Ribes, Colleen Andrews*

With the rising number of visitors to conservation land and increase in online trail information, land managers cite third party apps as a growing concern due to: overuse and overcrowding of popular trails; misuse that compromises resource protection (e.g., dogs and bikes where not allowed); unsafe use of trails that are unmanaged or "dangerous for the average hiker"; and conflicts with visitors relying on inaccurate app information. Third party apps have a responsibility to support the safety, preservation, and improvement of the visitor experience. Speakers will discuss how AllTrails is working with conservation land managers in Massachusetts to mitigate these issues and improve relationships with on-the-ground staff through its Public Lands program.

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## **10:35 – 11:50 a.m. Concurrent Sessions**

### **Funders Panel: Perspectives on Successfully Applying for Grants**

*Kathy McGrath, Laurel Plotzke Callahan, Steve Sloan*

The foundation representatives will discuss their organization's application, evaluation, and selection process. Each will provide their perspective on what's important in the various aspects of application or proposal. Then the panel will answer questions from the audience.

### **Getting to Yes with Private Landowners**

*Mark Robinson, Brendan Annett*

An old saying in our business is "If you aren't speaking with landowners, what are you doing?". Land trusts are the only non-profit environmental groups that know how to make a deal for land acquisition. Working with private landowners can be a delicate and patience dance, and may not bear fruit for many years. Trust and presence are key. The presenters have worked with hundreds of landowning families for many decades and grasp what works and what doesn't. We will explore outreach techniques, discuss the land conservation process and general tax benefits, and the importance of follow-up. Who might introduce you? What research should you do before meeting? How do you keep the conversation going until fruition? Finally, the importance of face time, not Face Time.

### **Experiences and Resources from a Recent Land Trust Merger**

*Anna Wilkins, Ray Lyons*

After a high-level overview of non-profit mergers, you'll hear about how one all-volunteer land trust worked through their succession plan to arrive at the decision to merge with an overlapping regional land trust. With conservation law experts to help answer questions on technical aspects and other models for shared responsibilities, our panelists will give insights and share resources that can start your organizational succession plan off on the right foot.

### **Land Trusts & Long-Term Partnering to Build a Greenway**

*Colin Novick, Scott Morrison*

The White Oak Land Conservation Society, a local unstaffed land trust, and The Greater Worcester Land Trust, a small staffed land trust, have partnered on the Four Town Greenway along their shared border for over 15 years to jointly build a +1000 acre greenway that neither could have done alone. With strategic planning, joint negotiations, joint acquisitions, joint fundraising, and joint management, the Four Town Greenway is not only a major wildlife habitat and recreation achievement, but is a testament to the power of small groups banding together to do big things. Scott and Colin will walk participants through the creative partnerships and the shared trust that have made this work a potential model for smaller groups.

### **CR Stewardship: What Can and Will Go Wrong**

*Sally Naser, Olivia Lukacic*

This session dives into conservation restriction stewardship from the standpoint of preventing issues and violations and what happens when they come up. With a history of 50 years of CRs at The Trustees of Reservations, Trustees staff will provide examples and case studies for building landowner relationships, due diligence work during the drafting and CR process, and when to get TerraFirma or other experts involved.

### **Aboriginal Rights and Land Conservation**

*Pam Ellis, Andre StrongBearHeart Gaines Jr.*

This workshop will provide an introduction to the legal basis and scope of aboriginal rights in what is now called Massachusetts through a presentation and discussion of treaties, statutes, executive

orders, and federal and state case law. The workshop will further examine the intersection of aboriginal rights and land conservation.

### **Passive Forest Management**

*Paul Catanzaro, Lina Clifford*

Rather than viewing them as opposite, passive and active forest management are complimentary approaches to reach our overall forest conservation goals. There is increased interest from conservation organizations and the Healey administration in expanding the passive approach to forest management. While the greatest opportunities to increase passive forest management are on public and NGO land, family forests can play an important role since they own the majority of forests. This presentation will outline approaches to passive forest management and the important ways passive and active forest management complement one another at the property, landscape, and statewide level. We will describe family forest owner attitudes towards this approach based on the findings of a new regional landowner survey. Finally, strategies land trusts can use to implement passive forest management on fee land and on CRs will be discussed, including the use of forever wild easements.

### **Increasing the Pace of Farmland Protection: Funding Opportunities & Strategies**

*Jamie Pottner, Rita Thibodeau, David Viale*

Nearly 75,000 acres of Massachusetts farmland are projected to be converted to non-farm uses by 2040. At the same time, a massive, historic increase in federal funding for farmland protection will become available starting in 2024 and is projected to increase significantly over the next five years. This workshop will provide an overview of the farm protection funding tools, timelines, and new strategies being envisioned by the MLTC Ag Conservation Working Group, in partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resource (MDAR), the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and American Farmland Trust (AFT). We will share practical tools and guidance for the Massachusetts conservation community and examples of how land trusts, towns, and landowners can contribute towards accelerating the pace of farm protection in their communities.

### **Land Trusts as Partners in Ecological Restoration**

*Jason Clermont, Cynthia Henshaw, Mike Huguenin*

Land trusts serve an increasingly important role in the ecological restoration space, both as landowner and as a pivotal entity in the community. Partnerships are a path for land trusts to elevate their role in advancing ecological restoration. However, balancing the changes to a landscape necessary to enact ecological restoration and the strategic vision of land trusts and their members are not always aligned. We will present the importance of land trusts as partners to ecological restoration, discuss the obvious and less obvious roles that land trusts may play in advancing ecological restoration efforts, how leaders and members of land trusts can become more informed about ecological restoration, and ask those in attendance to weigh in on the discussion, including how to align ecological restoration priorities and land conservation visions.

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**11:50 a.m. – 1:55 p.m. Lunch / Exhibits / Networking / Keynote**

**11:50 – 12:45 p.m.**

Visit exhibitors, lunch (55 minutes). Optional lunch networking by interest group in side rooms.

**12:45 – 1:55 p.m.** in the Auditorium

Conference Welcome from MLTC Executive Director Robb Johnson and President Cynthia Henshaw

Remarks by Rebecca Tepper, Massachusetts Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Keynote address by **Darren Ranco, PhD**, a citizen of the Penobscot Nation, Professor of Anthropology, Chair of Native American Programs, and Faculty Fellow at the Mitchell Center for Sustainability Solutions at the University of Maine. He has a Master of Studies in Environmental Law from Vermont Law School and a PhD in Social Anthropology from Harvard University.

Topic: **Centering Indigenous Peoples and Nations in Land Protection and Conservation: Wabanaki Possibilities**

Dr. Ranco's address will reflect perspectives from his work with the Wabanaki Commission on Land and Stewardship, which you can learn more about [here](#).

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**2:15 – 3:30 p.m. Concurrent Sessions**

**Let's Talk Legal Topics**

*Buzz Constable, Elizabeth Wroblecka, Susan Crane*

Land transactions, stewardship, regulation, partnering, administration, and financing all have current legal issues. We will discuss several of these as well as respond to any questions which may be submitted before or at the session. The discussion attempts to speak to experienced laypersons and attorneys who attend as well as those who present.

**Team Up with Your Municipality: DCS Open Space & Recreation Grant Programs**

*Melissa Cryan, Vanessa Farny, Allen Decker*

This workshop will provide a brief overview of DCS grant programs focused on land protection and/or recreation [Drinking Water Supply Protection, Land and Water Conservation Fund, Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities, Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity, Conservation Partnership, Landscape Partnership, Assistance for Small Communities] with an emphasis on examples of how land trusts can/have partnered with municipalities in the past to secure grants for their communities to achieve conservation of priority lands.

**Watershed-Scale Collaboration: Advancing Climate Resilience**

*Melissa Ocana, Carolyn Norkiewicz, Julie Wood*

In this workshop, we will explore why climate adaptation at the watershed-scale is critical to effectively respond to flooding and drought, and can result in more impactful and equitable benefits for people and nature. We'll share work from collaboratives on-the-ground and how we

brought them together to amplify their stories through an outreach toolkit. We'll hear how the state's Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Grant Program encourages regional approaches to adaptation, including watershed collaboration, and how collaboratives are exploring land conservation as a climate resilience action. We will also facilitate small group discussion about the opportunities for greater collaboration between land trust and watershed scale collaboratives.

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### **Give Back to the Land Day: A Case Study in Collaborative Fundraising**

*Mary Lynn Sabourin, Sebastian LaMontagne, Katie Carr, Jessica Bryant*

This workshop explores how collaborative fundraising days can enhance the fundraising efforts of individual organizations. In 2020, four regional land trusts in Western MA joined together for Give Back to the Land Day, a 24-hour online giving day scheduled around Earth Day. Since then, they have raised over \$250,000 for land conservation through this annual event. Learn from fundraisers at Franklin Land Trust, Hilltown Land Trust, Kestrel Land Trust, and Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust about the origins of this fundraising day, what has worked well, and what hasn't worked so well.

### **Forest Vulnerability to Climate Change and Opportunities for Stewardship**

*Josh Rapp, Christian Marks, Alison Wright-Hunter*

Forests cover 60% of Massachusetts, providing important wildlife habitat, clean air and water, benefits to human health and local economies, and climate regulation through the sequestration and storage of carbon. Mass Audubon and MA DCR will lead a workshop that examines how forests are vulnerable to climate change, approaches for assessing these vulnerabilities, and opportunities for increasing forest resilience through stewardship. Mass Audubon will describe the approach they've taken to assess vulnerabilities at wildlife sanctuaries across 18,000 acres. DCR will describe efforts that are part of the Forests as Climate Solutions Initiative to support landowners in assessing climate vulnerabilities and stewardship planning and implementation.

### **Using Community Science Programing to Support Your Conservation Efforts**

*Isabel Bronson, Julie Richburg*

Interested in learning about the development, implementation, and impacts of community science programs? Join TerraCorps Land Stewardship Coordinator Isabel Bronson and Lead Inland Ecologist Julie Richburg in exploring how they have been using this participatory science approach to support the work and goals of The Trustees. During this presentation, they will discuss the development of their long-term grassland bird monitoring community science program and how the data collected by volunteers is aiding in the conservation of grassland obligate bird species, such as the charismatic bobolink, and the adaptation of bird-friendly grassland habitat management on their properties across the state. Additionally, they will touch upon the ongoing development of a biodiversity monitoring initiative and bird box monitoring program.

### **Creative Approaches to Hiring and Retaining Staff**

*Jen Plowden, Kate Bowditch, Emma Ellsworth*

Land trusts provide opportunities for individuals to work, day-in and day-out, toward a great mission. Who doesn't want to help save planet earth and connect people to nature? And while that alone may have been enough to recruit and retain star employees in the past, trends indicate it may not be enough today – particularly if our organizations want to become more reflective of the communities in which we work, which are typically younger and more diverse. In this session,



presenters will share statistics about today's workers and an overview of strategies that organizations across the country are deploying to hire talented staff and retain them. This session will highlight case studies from two land trusts in Massachusetts that are working to address pay equity as well as staff contentment and retention. Come prepared to learn about innovative approaches, including some low-cost ideas you can take back to your organization.

**Striving to Create an Antiracist Land Trust**

*Michelle Chalmers, Christina Horner*

Join an interracial team of antiracist facilitators to explore opportunities to create/advance an antiracist land trust. Whether you have begun the work or have been wanting to engage your team, come and explore an opportunity to put a plan into action. Let's examine shared antiracist language/definitions, why is it important to center antiracism in your land trust, and how to examine your policies, procedures, website and literature with an antiracist lens. Come with questions and let's engage.

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**Friday, April 26, various times                      Outdoor Field Trips**

**Space is limited. Separate registration required.** Meeting place details will be sent to registrants prior to the outing. Each field trip host will contact registrants with any weather-related updates. Walks may be postponed or canceled at the discretion of the host. When registering, you will be required to attest that you will not attend if you test positive for, or are experiencing possible symptoms of, COVID-19.

<b>Area</b>	<b>Walk Title and Terrain</b>
Sheffield (Berkshires / West)	Floodplain Restoration at Bartholomew's Cobble
Easthampton (CT River Valley)	River to Mountain: Bridging Landscapes, Bridging Partnerships Mt. Tom Trailhead Park and the Old Pascommuck historical trail
Worcester area	Revitalizing Wetlands in an Urban Watershed: Broad Meadow Brook Restoration
Wheelwright (Central)	Wheelwright Dam Removal Project Wheelright
Mattapoissett area (Southeast)	Mattapoissett River Valley Partnership: Coordinated Watershed Scale Land Conservation and Habitat Restoration on the South Coast
Ipswich (North Shore)	



	Landscape Scale Restoration in the Great Marsh Ipswich – North Shore
Ipswich (North Shore)	<b>Bonus: Friday, May 17</b> Community Science Helping Grassland Birds

A big thank you to **our generous conference sponsors!**

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- Sheriff's Meadow Foundation
- Sudbury Valley Trustees
- SWCA Environmental Consultants
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