



MASSACHUSETTS LAND TRUST COALITION

## MassLand E-News

The Newsletter of the Massachusetts Land Conservation Community

December 15, 2020, Volume 18, Number 12

### Member Spotlight



#### Saving an Iconic Landscape

North County Land Trust has a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to protect 200 acres including the south peak of Mt. Watatic. Mt. Watatic is a 1,832-foot monadnock just south of the Massachusetts–New Hampshire border, at the southern end of the Wapack Range of mountains. It lies within Ashburnham and Ashby, in Massachusetts, and New Ipswich in New Hampshire. It's the terminus for the 22-mile Wapack Trail (heading north into NH) and the 92-mile Midstate Trail (heading south to CT). This parcel is part of a quilt of iconic landscapes and provides a critical addition to an unfragmented block of natural habitat. It would complete preservation of the entire summit of the popular Mt. Watatic. NCLT is working in partnership with the Department Fish and Game, as this property has been on the region's radar as a key property of conservation interest for decades due to its high conservation and recreational value. [Learn more](#). Or contact NCLT with questions at [awilkins@northcountylandtrust.org](mailto:awilkins@northcountylandtrust.org) or 978-466-3900.

Here's your opportunity to **highlight a project in the works, or a current conservation success**

**story!** Send a short description and a photo to [enews@massland.org](mailto:enews@massland.org). We'd like to highlight properties in various parts of the state, so if we don't get to you this month, we will soon.

If you'd like to support MLTC's efforts to educate, connect, and advocate for the Massachusetts land conservation community, please consider making a monthly or one-time tax-deductible donation Thank you!

Donate



## MassLand News



What a pleasure to join Groundwork Lawrence in November for a tour of the Ferrous Site, a beautiful 7.5 acre woodland and meadow created on post-industrial land at the historic and scenic confluence of Lawrence's North Canal and the Spicket and Merrimack Rivers. Kudos to all involved in this outstanding project!

*Robb*

### **Land Trust Networking and Collaboration: Middlesex and Worcester Counties**

Wednesday, January 13, 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm

Land trusts big and small have much to learn from one another. This "Stronger Together" networking event, sponsored by the Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition through funding from MA DCR's *Working Forests Initiative*, will be facilitated by Robb Johnson (MLTC) and Paul Catanzaro (UMass), and focus on exchanging information among peers on topics of common interest in your region. The one-hour informal discussion is intended for staff and board members of non-profit land conservation organizations working in the Middlesex and Worcester Counties, as well as open space committee members in the region. The event will not be recorded. Advance [registration required here](#).

### **All Volunteer Land Trusts: Recruiting Board Members & Volunteers**

Thursday, January 21, 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Part of MLTC's "Stronger Together" Series, this informal one-hour discussion is intended for board members of all-volunteer land trusts, with a focus on exchanging information on topics of common interest. The conversation will be facilitated by Robb Johnson and will not be recorded. [Register here](#).

### **Land Trust Networking and Collaboration: Connecticut Valley Region**

Wednesday, January 27, 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm

This "Stronger Together" networking event, sponsored by the Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition through funding from MA DCR's *Working Forests Initiative*, will be facilitated by Robb Johnson (MLTC) and Paul Catanzaro (UMass). This one-hour informal discussion is intended for staff and

board members of non-profit land conservation organizations working in the Franklin, Hampshire and Hampden Counties, as well as open space committee members in the region. The event will not be recorded. Advance [registration required here](#).



### **Conference Sponsorship Opportunities**

**March 19 & 20, 2021**

Gain visibility and connect with hundreds of community and non-profit leaders who are passionate about land conservation. Consider sponsoring the 2021 Massachusetts & Rhode Island Land Conservation Conference, which includes opportunities for exposure before, during and after the online conference. [See details here](#).

## Policy

### **Action Alert! State Operating Budget**

In an incredible acknowledgement of the critical role nature plays in our wellbeing and economy, all four Green Budget Coalition priorities got increases in the operating budget approved by the legislature in early December. Unfortunately, the Governor vetoed three of those increases! There is still hope, but we need you to ask legislators to override the governor's vetoes to ensure environmental protection in Massachusetts. Time is of the essence, so please act now!

Click [here](#) to find contact information for your legislators, then leave messages or send emails asking them to override the Governor's veto and restore the Conference Committee's budget recommendations for the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), and the Division of Ecological Restoration (DER). Click [here](#) for a sample script.

## News

### **2020 Charitable Donations to Non-Profit Organizations - Update**

Certain provisions of the CARES Act end December 31, 2020. Two of note are. The first is that people who take the standard tax deduction may now also claim a deduction of up to \$300 in qualified charitable donations to qualified charities / non-profits. This is on top of the standard deduction. Normally, such deductions are only available to those who itemize deductions. Donations must be in cash or credit card directly to the non-profit organization. Gifts of stock or other assets are not eligible, nor are gifts to donor-advised funds, supporting organizations, or most private foundations. The second provision benefits those who do itemize deductions. They may deduct cash gifts up to 100 percent of their adjusted gross income in 2020— up from the normal 60 percent – subject to the same caveats described above. [Read more](#) about these features of the CARES Act before discussing with prospective and current donors. And as always, take care not to provide tax advice to donors, but rather encourage them to seek input from a qualified professional.

### **Federal Orders Limit Inclusiveness Training**

*Sourced from Land Trust Alliance*

In late September, the federal administration issued an [Executive Order](#) (EO) prohibiting federal agencies and contractors from conducting workplace diversity trainings that include certain defined "divisive concepts". The EO requires that federal contracts prohibit such training regardless of the source of funds. The Office of Management and Budget issued [Notice M-20-37](#) and the Department of Labor, through its Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs, released [FAQs](#). Additionally, a [news release](#) announced a hotline and email to investigate complaints immediately under

existing [Executive Order 11246](#). The Independent Sector has [published an FAQ](#) based on advice from its law firm. It is possible that the incoming administration will rescind this order, but if you are expecting a fiscal year 2021 grant or other award of federal dollars in any manner, even from a foundation regrants, be certain to study the granting instrument carefully for the mandating agreements.

### **Disability Inclusion Survey**

*Sourced from Land Trust Alliance*

The Alliance is partnering with Lakeshore Foundation to identify how land trusts currently address inclusion of people with disabilities in their organizations. The purpose of the survey is to learn more about how organizations experience working with and for people with disabilities, and about land trusts' commitment to providing programming that is accessible to all. Survey results will be used by the Alliance to better guide and support land trusts in their inclusion efforts. [Access the survey](#) and instructions.

### **Cultural Respect and Land Justice**

For your contemplation, we'd like to share an essay and a short video that passed over our desks recently. [Full Moon Rising](#), by Peter Forbes, poetically highlights why centering Indigenous voice, and sharing and returning land, are essential to repairing the earth and creating a stronger conservation movement. [Cultural Respect Agreement](#) (by Zygote Digital Films), describes a cooperative project of Native Land Conservancy and The Dennis Conservation Trust on Cape Cod, demonstrating the respectful way this model agreement came to be.

### **Successful Ballot Questions Huge Success for U.S. Parks and Public Lands**

*Sourced from The Trust for Public Land*

Voters approved nearly \$3.7 billion in new funding for land conservation, parks, climate resiliency, and habitat. Voters approved *all* of the 26 measures supported by The Trust for Public Land and The Trust for Public Land Action Fund. [Read the full results](#) by state.

### **Farm Credit East Releases "Northeast Economic Engine" Report**

[Available to download](#), this report, using 2017 data, illustrates the importance of agriculture, commercial fishing, forest products and related industries to the Northeast economy.

### **Nip the Knotweed**

*Sourced from our conservation friends in Connecticut*

Nip knotweed organically! No more mowing, pulling or chemicalizing. It's as easy as 1. 2. 3.! Cut at the base. Bag and dispose of. Plant natives. For details, and resources on planting natives, [read more](#).



## **Webinars and E-Learning**



### **Response, Recovery and Resilience in the MA Local Food System: a Discussion Series**

The Massachusetts Food System Collaborative is hosting a series of discussions to examine challenges COVID-19 has presented to our local food system, and what policy solutions might be needed to address them. Sessions feature presentations from practitioners and policy experts. Breakout sessions follow the presentations. Read the [full program here](#).

**Challenges facing Massachusetts farms: land, education, regulation, and**

**economic and financial sustainability.**

Thursday, December 17, 2 pm - 4 pm

[Register here.](#)

**Local food system supply chain: balancing safety, efficiency, and sustainability.**

Monday, January 4, 2 pm - 4 pm

[Register here.](#)



### **MACC Seeks Proposals for the 2021 Virtual Annual Environmental Conference**

**Deadline:** Friday, December 18, 5 pm

**Conference:** April 6 - 17, 2021

The Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions (MACC) is seeking workshop proposals for the 2021 Virtual Annual Environmental Conference. Proposals should relate directly to one of six tracks: climate change; advanced Wetlands Protection Act topics; land conservation, management, and stewardship; environmental justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion; technology, tools, and tips; and law and advocacy. All workshops will be 60 minutes long, with 10 to 15 minutes for questions and discussion. All workshops will be recorded. Find [details here.](#)

## **MassWoods**

### **"Protecting Your Legacy" Landowner Webinar Series**

This webinar series is for landowners interested in planning the future of their land. Sign up for individual webinars or the entire series. Runs one per month through April. [Learn more](#) and view recordings of previous talks.

[Register here.](#)

### **Reducing property taxes through Chapter 61**

Tuesday, January 12 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm

Property taxes can be a barrier to land ownership. This session focusses on Chapter 61 current use programs and their role in conservation-based estate planning.

### **Exploring land protection tools**

Tuesday, February 9 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm

Want to keep some or all of your land in its undeveloped, natural state forever? Learn how land protection tools, such as conservation restrictions, can help you achieve your goal.



### **Forest Ecology of New England Woodlands**

Tuesday, January 19, 7 pm - 8 pm, free

This webinar is part of Woodland Connections for Women, which aims to build a network of women landowners in Massachusetts to share resources and learning opportunities. The webinar will include a presentation followed by questions and discussions amongst landowners.

[Read more.](#) [Register here.](#)



### **Farm Succession Advisors Training**

**Date:** Tuesday, January 26, 10 am - 3 pm

Successful farm transfers require a supportive and knowledgeable team of service providers. Land For Good, with a grant from Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE), will host this training for service providers who work with - or want to work with - farmers in transfer and succession planning. These may include extension educators, conservation groups, farm agency personnel, attorneys, land trusts, farm

link programs, and others. Trainings are also available in the other New England states. [Learn more](#). [Register here](#) for the Massachusetts program.

## Grants

### **2021 Restoration and Resilience COVID Recovery Fund**

**Deadlines:** February 1, April 1, June 1

Grants of up to \$2,500, to be spent over six months, are available to assist public lands impacted by increased use during the COVID-19 pandemic. For more information, eligibility, and application instructions, [read here](#). Certain restrictions apply.

### **Round 27 of the Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund Grant Program (MPPF)**

**Application presentation:** available for download Friday, January 15 [here](#)

**Application deadline:** Friday, March 19

The Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) is accepting applications for the MPPF, which is a state-funded 50% reimbursable matching grant program to support the preservation of properties, landscapes, and sites (cultural resources) listed in the State Register of Historic Places. Applicants must be a municipality or nonprofit organization. Eligible activities are: pre-development, development, and acquisition projects. [Details here](#). [Apply](#).

### **Small Communities Grants**

**Deadline:** rolling. Final date is May 7, 2021.

The FY 2021 [Small Communities Grant Program](#) provides funding to municipalities with 6,000 or fewer residents to produce Open Space and Recreation Plans, complete other plans to facilitate land conservation, and/or prepare appraisals as required to apply for the other [DCS grant programs](#).

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. [Apply here](#). Contact Nathaniel Thomas [nathaniel.thomas1@mass.gov](mailto:nathaniel.thomas1@mass.gov) with questions.

## Jobs

Got jobs to fill? Post them on the MLTC self-serve [Job Board](#)! Add one anytime.

[Assistant Director for Operations](#) - MA Division of Ecological Restoration (DER)

[Fiscal Manager](#) - MA Division of Ecological Restoration (DER)

[Executive Assistant/Trustee Liaison](#) - The Nature Conservancy (Search for job #49215)

See the [MLTC Job Board](#) on our website for the latest openings.

Also navigate to [massland.org](https://massland.org) > Resources > Job Board.

Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition | 18 Wolbach Rd., Sudbury, MA 01776 | <https://massland.org>