



ASHFIELD CHESTER CHESTERFIELD CONWAY CUMMINGTON  
 GOSHEN HUNTINGTON MIDDLEFIELD PLAINFIELD  
 WESTHAMPTON WILLIAMSBURG WINDSOR WORTHINGTON

If you are a Florence Bank Customer, please vote for us in the Customers' Choice Community Grants! You can vote via their website or grab a voting slip the next time you visit your bank branch.

And please remember Hilltown Land Trust on November 28th for Giving Tuesday, the annual day of charitable giving after Thanksgiving. Thank you for your support!

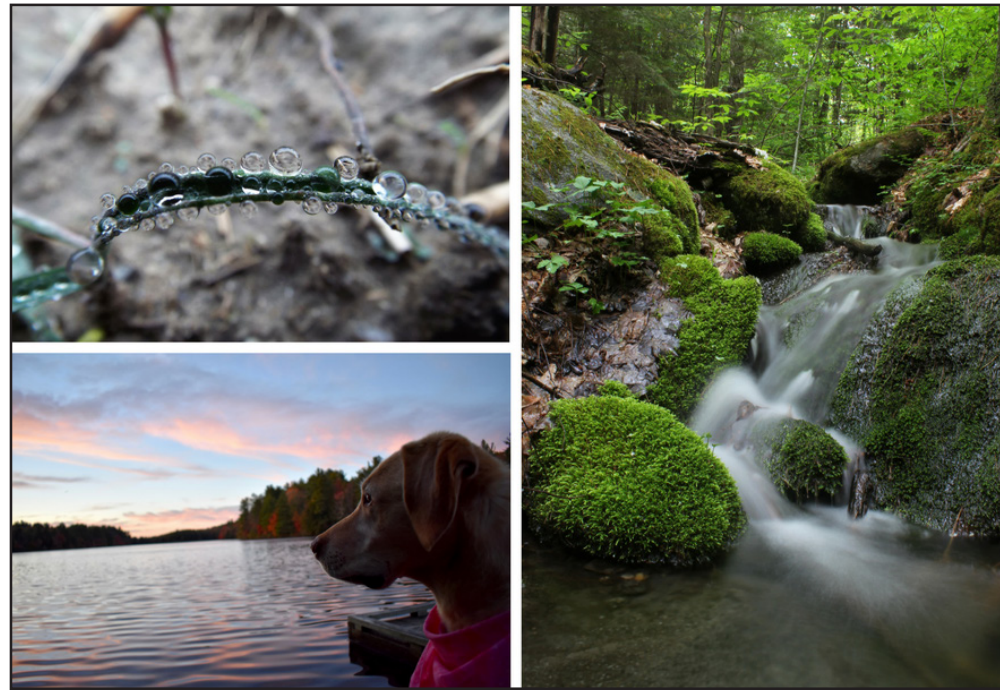


Photo contest winners (Youth category)  
 Clockwise from top left, photo by Lynsey Brodeur, Will Draxler, and Serena Griswold

## Hilltown Land Trust Board of Directors

Marie Burkart, *President* – Worthington  
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YES, I would like to make a donation/ renew my membership

- \$50 (basic membership level)
- \$100
- \$250
- \$500
- \$1,000
- Other amount \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide us with your contact information

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email address \_\_\_\_\_  
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I am interested in volunteer opportunities

Please make checks payable to **Hilltown Land Trust** and send to:  
 Hilltown Land Trust • 332 Bullitt Road • Ashfield, MA 01330

**Thank you for your support!**

332 BULLITT ROAD  
 ASHFIELD, MA 01330  

 HILLTOWN LAND TRUST  
 AN AFFILIATE OF THE TRUSTEES

## A Historic Walk in the Woods of Conway

By Tamsin Flanders, Hilltown Land Trust Land Stewardship Coordinator 2016-17

It all started with a colorful map my AmeriCorps predecessor Michael had made of historic trails in Conway, annotated with names, dates, and anecdotes related to old foundations and other infrastructure. Michael also left a note about Conway celebrating its 250th anniversary in 2017. When the 250th banner went up in town last fall, his map inspired me to propose a combined naturalism and history hike as part of the celebration.



Tamsin addresses the crowd as narrator

I took my idea to the January meeting of the anniversary committee and was given the green light. The walk quickly became more elaborate than I had envisioned, but I was completely on board. Working with local experts, we created a route—a trail in Conway State Forest through what was the late-18th through mid-19th century Cricket Hill settlement—and a format for the hike: a narrative tour with actors playing historic figures and a horse-drawn wagon to carry those that couldn't walk the full two miles. We recruited actors and a horse-drawn wagon, and researched gravestones, deeds, dates, and first-person narratives of the former inhabitants.

Inspired by a presentation by landscape-historian and author Tom Wessells, I wanted to include the history of the landscape of western Massachusetts so that participants could imagine how the forest around them appeared at the time Cricket Hill was settled. I began writing the script using the 1875 diary of a 15-year-old Cricket Hill resident along with the anecdotes, quotes, and a 1788 letter to the *Gazette* of Malachi Maynard, a Cricket Hill farmer who represented Conway in the first battles of the Revolutionary War and at the state's ratification of the federal constitution. These documents transformed into monologues given by two young local actors.



Malachi Maynard, played by Callum LaFrance, tells us about his life

We had no idea how many people to expect, but anticipated 50 max. Fortunately, there was plenty of space in this outdoor theater and on the morning of the hike we quickly adjusted to accommodate the expanding crowd. 112 people showed up that day for the event! We loaded the wagon, I stood up on the back of it to give the introduction to the crowd, and we were off.

The actors were wonderful and really brought the history to life. Despite the enormous crowd, I managed to hold the show together while painting a broad and

*continued next column*



*A Historic Walk, continued*

integrated picture of the landscape, town history, and the places and characters we encountered. The audience left us with lots of praise about the event.

I never imagined that my year of service with HLT would turn me into a playwright, director, and stage manager. The project not only challenged me, but also pushed HLT into community conservation. We were able to facilitate the creation of a connection between people and a public space that they can use again, and quite literally created a script for future use of the land.

## Introducing our 2017-2018 AmeriCorps members!

We have a new TerraCorps (formerly MassLIFT-AmeriCorps) Land Stewardship Coordinator this year. Meet Alana Carveth! She will be in charge of property monitoring, management, and mapping at HLT this year, among other duties.



*Katie and Alana at the Bullitt Reservation*

My favorite place in the Hilltowns is Bear Swamp. I'm a huge fan of wetlands and I enjoy the scenic vistas on the property.

### What draws you to land conservation?

I'm drawn to land conservation because I value nature and wildlife. Without land conserved from development, both are lost.

### When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up, or what did you think you were going to be?

When I was a kid, I thought I was going to be a naturalist. While very young, I was inspired by seeing the Crocodile Hunter, Steve Irwin, on TV. This interest was later reinforced from reading the works of Charles Darwin in school.

### What was your favorite outdoor activity as a kid and what is it now?

As a kid, I loved climbing trees, but now I enjoy hiking among the trees rather than being in them.

### What did you do before coming to HLT?

Before I came to HLT, I was in Maryland, working on obtaining my Master's degree in Environmental Biology.

We are also excited to announce that Katie Carr is back for a second year as our Community Engagement Coordinator. Katie organizes events for us and manages much of HLT's communications, including our social media, e-news, press releases, and these newsletters. Welcome back Katie!

Alana and Katie started their service year in September and will be with us until July, when their term of service ends. If you encounter them during the year, please thank them for all the important work that they do for HLT!

### Where did you grow up and how did that place shape your interest in land conservation?

I grew up in Farmington, Connecticut. While the town was mostly suburban sprawl, I grew to appreciate what little natural landscape was available to explore.

### What is your favorite place in the Hilltowns and why?

## Our New Property in Worthington



*Decaying log provides habitat for a variety of species at the Conwell property*

BioMap 2 Critical Natural Landscape or endangered species habitat and is noted as a vital connector of large blocks of land important to wildlife. A recent wildlife tracking study conducted by The Nature Conservancy confirms the property is an active wildlife crossing for mink, red fox, and other species moving between the Jackson Brook area and the Department of Fish and Game's Hiram Fox Wildlife Management Area to



*Rocky outcrop at the top of Eagle Nest Ridge*

the west. HLT is currently working with neighbors of the Conwell property and local trail enthusiasts to develop a property management plan that includes public trails, signage, boundary marking, and habitat management recommendations. The involvement of these knowledgeable volunteers will ensure that this property fits well with the neighborhood, and continues to provide important wildlife habitat. We look forward to opening the property to public recreation in the spring.

When taking on a new property, Hilltown Land Trust incurs significant costs including developing a property management plan, legal fees, and management costs in perpetuity, even if the land is a donation. We are grateful to the support of the Wild and Scenic Westfield River Committee and The Nature Conservancy's Berkshire Wildlife Linkage Catalyst Fund for their support of HLT's costs associated with this project. These grant funds combined with the generosity of landowners such as the Cooks and the involvement of many volunteers enable a small, community-based land trust like HLT to grow and thrive.

This fall, Cynthia Conwell Cook and Peter Cook donated 70 acres of their family land to Hilltown Land Trust. The property had been in the Conwell family since the early 1800s and was once owned by Russell Conwell (noted Civil War veteran, lawyer, preacher, founder of Temple University, and Cynthia Cook's great grandfather). The property contains wetlands, a small pond, a large tract of upland forest, and the top of Eagle Nest Ridge.

The Conwell Property is at the southern end of a large block of undeveloped land surrounding Jackson Brook in South Worthington. This is a priority conservation area for HLT where we already have over 350 acres of permanently protected land.

The Conwell land includes a half mile of frontage along the Little River which has been nominated for inclusion in the federal Westfield River Wild and Scenic designation. In addition, much of the property is designated as

## Join us at the Chesterfield Gorge 11/26!



*Runners at the starting line at last year's Gorge après Gorge*

right in the middle of our service area. HLT has been delighted to be involved in this event for the past three years. It brings people together to enjoy a beautiful natural area, a fun recreational activity, and community at a time when many people retreat indoors.

Gorge après Gorge is a race unlike any other. The personal touches are what make it so special: top finishers of the run get their pick of hand-knit and -crocheted hats as prizes; every race finisher gets a homemade cookie medal; and runners, walkers, spectators, and volunteers are all invited to participate in a potluck after the event. People greet old friends and neighbors and meet new ones. And the setting is spectacular!

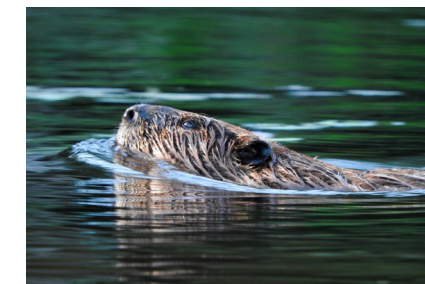
Pre-register for the race now at [runreg.com/gorge-apres-gorge](http://runreg.com/gorge-apres-gorge) and take advantage of the discount for Hilltown Land Trust members! We hope to see you on November 26th!

November 26th, 2017 marks the third year that HLT has co-sponsored the Gorge après Gorge 5k trail run and family fun walk, and the 13th year of this annual event. Gorge après Gorge is a wonderful, community-focused event at the Chesterfield Gorge,

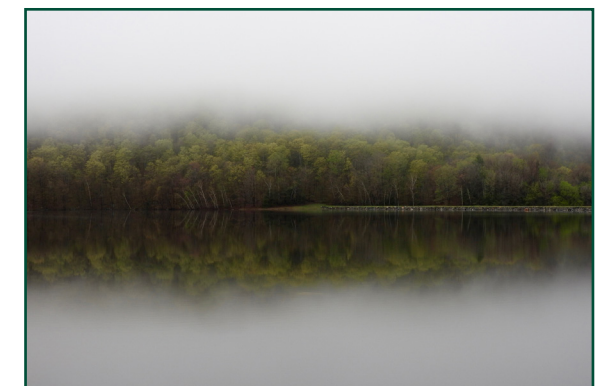
## 2017 Fall Photo Contest: Water, Everywhere

Last month, HLT held our third Fall Photo Contest, this year with the theme "Water, Everywhere." We asked people to send us their photos of water, in any form (ice, snow, river, lake, frost, dew, mist, etc.), taken in a natural setting in a rural town west of the Connecticut River. This year we had two categories: Adult (19 and older) and Youth (18 and under).

Please join us in congratulating the winner of our Adult category, Elizabeth Kulik, and the runner up, Matthew Watson. And congratulations also to the winners of the Youth category, who all tied for first place: Lynsey Brodeur, Serena Griswold, and Will Draxler. All of their photos will receive professional framing, thanks to a generous donation by the R. Michelson Galleries.



*Runner-up in the Adult category by Matthew Watson*



*Winning photo in the Adult category by Elizabeth Kulik*

Help us celebrate the winners and all the wonderful entries by coming to Photos & Pie at the Bullitt Reservation on December 10th at 3:00, where you can view all of the images, meet the participants, and eat pie! More details can be found on our website or Facebook page.