

## A Poem

### The Ice Goddess

The ice goddess arrived as always  
under the cloudless cover of darkness,  
turning water into diamonds,  
laughing, slipping her stiletto fingers  
into the cells of sweet basil waiting for pesto,  
crushing the pole beans, still green,  
sweeping her knife-edged hand  
along the membrane walls of tomatoes  
foolishly left on the vine to color  
from hints of blood that now would never bloom.  
We knew her by the tracks she left in earth  
from the feet of her army of crows.

~Wil Hastings



PO Box 251  
Chesterfield, MA 01012

### THE HILLTOWN LAND TRUST MISSION STATEMENT:

- To conserve active farmland and other 'working' properties;
- To save native plant and wildlife habitats;
- To protect watersheds;
- To preserve the scenic and rural character of the Hilltowns.

*The Hilltown Land Trust recognizes that our towns must balance their need to create new housing and jobs with their need to preserve critical natural resources and their rural character. We're committed to being an important participant in this endeavor.*

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# NEWS

CHESTERFIELD, CUMMINGTON, GOSHEN, HUNTINGTON, MIDDLEFIELD,  
PLAINFIELD, WESTHAMPTON, WILLIAMSBURG, AND WORTHINGTON

## A Letter from Our President

It's been a great year for the Hilltown Land Trust. Below are some of our accomplishments.

### New Farm Conservation

**Restrictions:** As you may have seen in *The Daily Hampshire Gazette* and *Country Journal* on December 27, we closed two conservation restrictions in Worthington: the 86-acre farm on Kinne Brook Road owned by Toni Lake and the adjoining 166-acre farm on Patterson Road owned by Paul Strasburg. (See article below.) These properties link—through Hattie Plehn's West Street farm, on which we also hold a conservation restriction—to the state's Fox Den Wildlife Management Area. Together, they will establish a wildlife corridor from Kinne Brook

Road west into Middlefield. These donated conservation restrictions are truly gifts to the planet, which needs every bit of help it can get. And there are more CRs in the works—to be announced when they are completed.

**New Grant, New Database, New Staff:** We are beginning to outgrow our traditional ways. We've received a \$9650 grant from the Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition, funded by the Kohlburg Foundation, to help us build a web-based informational database to manage our CRs (23 to date) and owned land (6 parcels totaling 597 acres) as well as manage the expected transition in 2009 from an all-volunteer land trust to one with staff—one part-time and surely overworked executive

director. But not a small change and we will have to adapt how we work to the new reality. Actually, we're all pretty excited. We'll start the search for the director early next year.

**Web site, Email, Telephone:** Finally, you must visit our newly enhanced website: [www.hilltown-land-trust.org](http://www.hilltown-land-trust.org), where you can now download trail maps for the 41-acre Bradley Sanctuary and the 67-acre Breckenridge Sanctuary, both in Williamsburg. Along with our website we have a new e-mail address: [ContactUs@hilltown-land-trust.org](mailto:ContactUs@hilltown-land-trust.org). And, thanks to the Highland Communities Initiative, we have a telephone number as well: 413-268-8374.

**Wil Hastings**

## Two Farms Saved in Worthington

The Hilltown Land Trust announces the completion of its acquisition of Conservation Restrictions on two Worthington farms, bordering on Kinne Brook and Patterson Roads and West Street, totaling more than 250 acres. "These two beautiful and contiguous farms, among the last in the Kinne Brook Valley section of Worthington, will be preserved substantially in their present condition, available for farming and forestry indefinitely into the future," says Wil Hastings, President of the land trust.

The Conservation Restrictions were donated to the Hilltown Land Trust by the current owners of the farms, Antonia Lake and Paul Strasburg, and will provide a contiguous wildlife habitat stretching west from Worthington's Kinne Brook Road into the Fox Den Wildlife Management Area held by the state's Department of Fisheries and Wildlife in Worthington and Middlefield.

"Central to these gifts," says Wil, "is the protection of a significant portion of the Kinne

Brook itself, a major cold-water tributary of the Middle Branch of the Federally-designated 'Wild and Scenic' Westfield River. These are gifts to the planet, for which we are very grateful."

As these are charitable contributions, the owners will be entitled to deductions from their federally-taxed income for the value of these gifts. Because the farms are already enrolled in the state's current land-use programs under Chapters 61 and 61A, no reduction in the real estate taxes for these properties is expected. ♦

## New HLT Walking Trail in Huntington

The Hilltown Land Trust is delighted to announce the opening of a new 1.2-mile walking trail on part of the 379-acre property donated to the HLT by Frank Stevens on Pisgah Road in Huntington. This beautiful trail winds through a wooded landscape studded with hundreds of large boulders covered in mosses, ferns and lichens. It passes a very early cellar hole and maple sugarhouse ruin, climbs up and down steep slopes, and crosses a moist stream valley in three places. Expect lots of early spring wildflowers and a great variety of ferns, and look for signs of moose, deer, bear, coyote, porcupine, and many other mammals.

Newly cleared in the fall of 2007, much of the trail is not yet "worn in," and fallen leaves may hide small obstacles underfoot. Watch your step. The trail is

marked with survey flagging, to be replaced ASAP with paint blazes.

In winter, the trail is snowshoeable in deep soft snow, but hazardous when conditions are slippery; avoid it then. The trail is not suitable for X-C skiing or biking at any time, and all motorized vehicles are prohibited.

**Driving Directions to the Stevens Trail:** At the highest point on Route 66, 0.4 mile West of the Westhampton-Huntington town line, turn North off Route 66 onto Allen Coit Road. Go 0.4 mile to the intersection with Pisgah Road and bear Right onto Pisgah. Go 2.4 mile North from that intersection to HLT's unmarked parking pullout and small clearing at break in stone wall on the Right. Trail leaves the North side of the clearing, heading first slightly downhill and soon turning Right and uphill.

**Eric Weber**

## Celebrating Our CR Landowners

This past September the Hilltown Land Trust held its first dinner to officially honor landowners for placing their land in a Conservation Restriction (CR) with the HLT. Appropriately, the event was hosted by HLT treasurer Ruth Pardoe and her husband David at their farm in Huntington, which was the first CR the HLT undertook almost 20 years ago.

Wil Hastings, president of the HLT, aptly characterized our CR landowners as "local heroes." Thanking them for their generosity, foresight, and trust in the HLT, he said, "It's an incredible transition from owning your property to placing it in permanent conservation."

Of course, the conversation at any event at which HLT board members and landowners get together will inevitably focus on land conservation. At this dinner, the topic was how the HLT can continue its work most effectively. Some suggestions offered by landowners included educating the public and elected officials about the tax and financial benefits of land conservation, encouraging neighbor-to-neighbor meetings to identify land that should be preserved and discussing ways to do that, town by town, and reaching out to the next generation of landowners, such as the children of our CR landowners and residents who have recently bought land in the hilltowns.

For more information on Conservation Restrictions or any other land preservation issue, contact us at our new telephone number or e-mail address. ♦

## Truth (Inconvenient)

In an effort to help spread the Truth, the Hilltown Land Trust held a presentation based on Al Gore's movie "An Inconvenient Truth" on Sunday, October 14 at the Westhampton Town Hall. Denise Lepley of Northampton, a volunteer with The Climate Project, did a wonderful job of condensing Gore's presentation into the time available. Her presentation used a slide show with material from Gore's organization, The Climate Project. The story of climate change, its origins, its progression and its effects is backed by a vast amount of data and is very powerful. Our crowd on October 14 was quite small, but most attentive.

Through The Climate Project, Gore is seeking to reach a wider audience than his movie will reach, He has offered training sessions for anyone interested in becoming a volunteer presenter. These trainees are all intending to make presentations in their own communities at no charge. For any of us who would like to help disseminate Climate Change information and hold a presentation for any size audience, The Climate Project can find a local volunteer. Their website is [theclimateproject.org](http://theclimateproject.org). Or Denise can be contacted directly at [kirbygrl@comcast.net](mailto:kirbygrl@comcast.net).

Spreading the Truth is not unlike trying to get elected—constant efforts to reach people.

**Shirley Winer**

## Send Us Your E-Mail Address, Win a Prize!

To keep you better informed about Hilltown Land Trust events and important issues, we're asking members to send your e-mail address to our spanking-new e-mail address: [ContactUs@hilltown-land-trust.org](mailto:ContactUs@hilltown-land-trust.org). Use the opportunity to give us some feedback and ideas! And . . . all members who do will be eligible to win one of five official HLT hats at a drawing in early spring. Can life in the hilltowns get any better? ♦

## Our New Website

We invite to you visit the new HLT website at [www.hilltown-land-trust.org](http://www.hilltown-land-trust.org). (The address on our pre-printed newsletter forms will be corrected for the next issue.) You'll find general information about HLT and land protection tools, new pictures and maps, lists of our protected lands, and links to other organizations. Website editor Wendy Sweetser believes it will be an active "go to" resource for HLT members. ♦

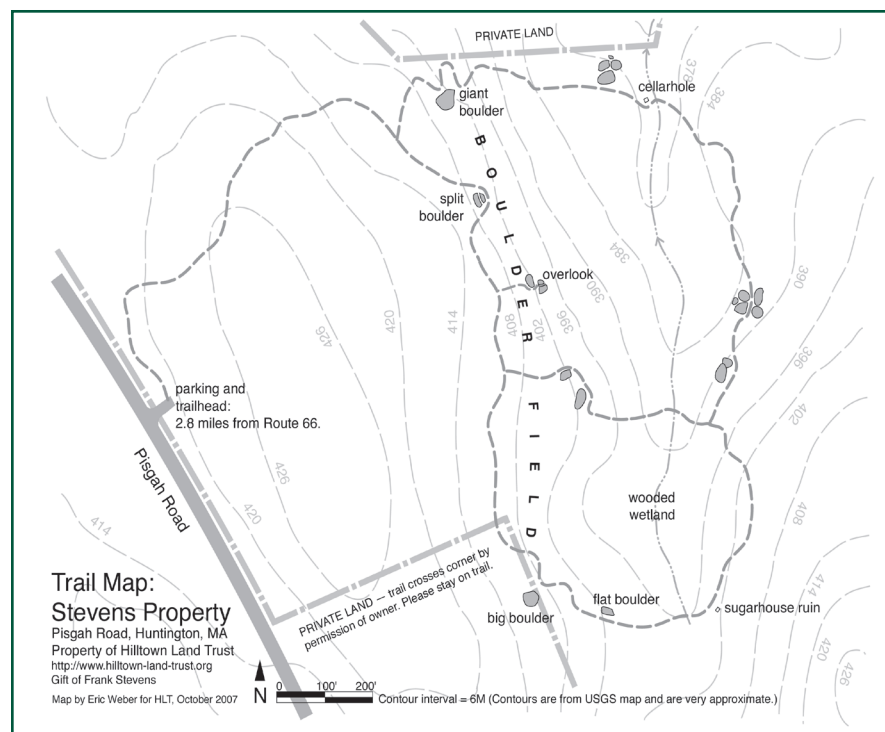
## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Woods Forum**  
Thursday, March 13, 7 p.m.  
Stanton Hall, Huntington  
Paul Catanzaro from the UMass Extension, landowners, and others will discuss forest management, conservation, and ownership decisions. For more info, call Susan at 413-667-8893.

**Davis Bates, Storyteller**  
Sunday, March 16, 3 to 5 p.m.  
Worthington Historical Society, Worthington

Come join us for an afternoon of stories and music by local celeb Davis Bates. Guaranteed fun for ages. Bring a friend or two. Refreshments. For more info, call Mary at 413-238-4221.

**Inaugural Hike on the Stevens Property's New Trail**  
Date and Time TBA



**JOIN US**

IF YOU SUPPORT THE WORK OF THE HILLTOWN LAND TRUST,  
ASK A FRIEND OR TWO OR THREE TO JOIN US.  
OR, BETTER YET, GIVE THEM THE GIFT OF A MEMBERSHIP  
TO THE HILLTOWN LAND TRUST.

HILLTOWN LAND TRUST P.O. BOX 251 CHESTERFIELD, MA 01012  
THANK YOU!

- \$35 PER YEAR  
(OUR BASIC "LAND LOVER")
- \$50 PER YEAR
- \$100 PER YEAR
- \$500 PER YEAR
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (OTHER) PER YEAR