

Support Hilltown Land Trust on Giving Tuesday!

On Tuesday, December 1, 2015, Hilltown Land Trust is participating in #GivingTuesday, a global day dedicated to giving that has involved over 27,000 organizations in 68 countries. This is similar to Valley Gives, but on an international scale. We encourage you to join the movement and visit www.givingtuesday.org to learn more about how you can make a difference. As a small organization that makes extensive use of volunteers, your money goes a long way with HLT!

Affiliation in Action: HLT's new Strategic Plan

HLT wrapped up a year-long strategic planning process this past August giving us a revised mission and vision statement and clearly articulating organizational values, goals, objectives and strategies for the next seven years. Our initial plan developed in 2010 defined HLT's conservation vision and focal areas for conservation efforts, but stopped short of articulating specific goals and objectives.

HLT elected to align our new plan with *The Path Forward*, the refreshed plan of our affiliate, The Trustees, and thus strengthen our partnership. Like The Trustees, HLT now has four main goals in the categories of Protect, Steward, Excite and Grow. We have set targets for our expansion in terms of new land protected, how we take care of that land, public engagement and growth of our financial resources. We hope to share a public version of this document in the coming months and we look forward to having a clear plan for how and why we want to grow.



First Place Camera:
Cupola From a Bygone Era
Paula Zindler, Cummington



Hilltown Land Trust's 1st photo contest, *Picturing the Hilltowns*, asked photographers to share the hilltown places that inspire them most. All photographs are currently on display at the Bullitt Reservation in Ashfield and remind us of the joy we experience from the land we share and love. The winning photos are featured in this newsletter.

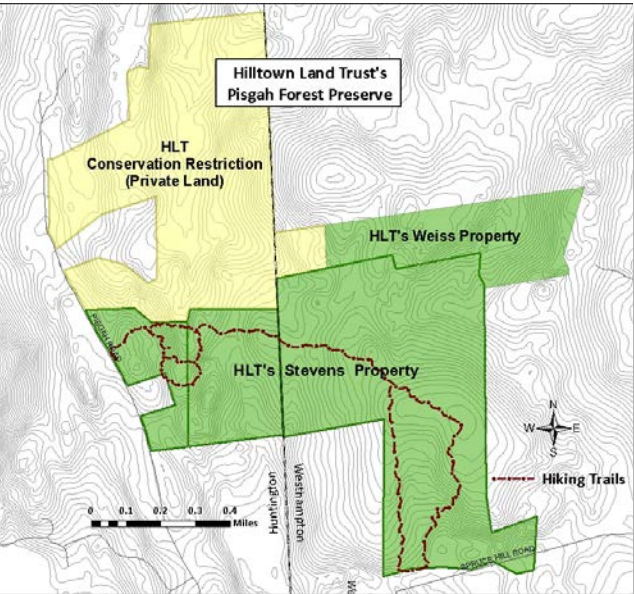
First Place Mobile Device:
View from Dead Bridge
Ruth Lehrer, Worthington



NEWSLETTER

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

Volunteers Spruce up HLT's largest property



forest health, diversifying wildlife habitat and supporting a market for sustainably-harvested forest products. In 2014, HLT added nearly 90 acres of land in Westhampton to this protected block thanks to a donation from Dr. Nancy Weiss. An adjacent 256-acre Conservation Restriction, held by HLT, creates 725 acres of protected land in this corner of Westhampton and Huntington.

HLT initially created a 1.2-mile trail loop through a spectacular glacial boulder field on the Huntington side of the Stevens property, and more recently a 4-mile loop trail

Visitors to HLT's Stevens Property in Huntington and Westhampton will now have more luck finding the trails at our largest property. On a beautiful October day, a team of ten volunteers fanned out across this 379-acre property to make some much-needed improvements. We installed a new kiosk at the Pisgah Road trailhead that gives visitors information about the property's history, ecology and trails. Two groups of volunteers improved trail blazes and placed maps at key (and confusing) trail junctions in the woods. We also cleared a large hemlock tree from a remote section of the trail and pruned many overgrown limbs along the way.

All of this work is spelled out in a 2014 management plan for the Stevens Property. Additional tasks include clearer marking of the property boundaries and some modest timber harvesting to improve forest health and diversity.

Frank Stevens donated the 267-acre Westhampton portion of this property to HLT in 2003 and the 112-acre Huntington portion in 2005. From the start, HLT intended to use this land as a showcase for green forestry practices that generate modest income for the organization while promoting

into the more remote east end of the property including the 1,543-foot summit of Mount Pisgah. This trail network is an excellent venue for longer hikes with connecting trails to the center of Westhampton and Route 66. Visitors are welcome to use the property in any season for passive recreational activities. The property is home to an abundance of wildlife including moose, bear, coyote, and many other mammals. The overlook offers nice views, particularly in winter.



New Kiosk, Pisgah Road Trailhead

New AmeriCorps Members Arrive at HLT!

By Phoebe Gelbard, HLT Intern

Meet Andrea Caluori-Rivera and Michael Madole, Hilltown Land Trust’s two new MassLIFT AmeriCorps members!

1. What is your position at Hilltown Land Trust and what is your favorite part about it?

Andrea: I am the Community Engagement Coordinator at Hilltown Land Trust. I connect our local communities to HLT’s important land protection work through engaging outreach efforts. I particularly enjoy creating new collaborative events with other community partners that bridge HLT’s land protection work with the arts and local history.

Michael: I’m the Land Stewardship Coordinator. My primary goal is to make sure that the properties HLT oversees are monitored in a timely and effective manner. My favorite part by far is getting to know the hilltowns better, and having the opportunity to explore some amazing places which I would otherwise have no idea existed!



Michael Madole

2. What did you do before coming to HLT?

Andrea: Last year I served as a RISE AmeriCorps member at Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School. Before that, I taught Italian language and cultural studies at the university level while a grad student. Before graduate school I interned at the New-York Historical Society and taught American history and literature in Italy.

Michael: Before I was here I was a Vet Tech at Williamsburg Animal Clinic in Williamsburg, MA, so I know a lot of people in the area (and their animals’ names!) I was also a horse-logging apprentice on All Together Farm in Randolph Center, VT, where I learned a lot about low impact forestry and sustainable logging practices.

3. What is your favorite HLT or Trustees property and why?

Andrea: I really love the William Cullen Bryant Homestead in Cummington. One of my favorite paintings is Asher B. Durand’s “Kindred Spirits.” It depicts Bryant and painter Thomas Cole surveying a beautiful landscape. At the homestead, I often think back to a time in American history when writers and artists like Cole and Bryant saw the landscape as representative of our country’s identity. It was inspired by the rustic wilderness of the American landscape, the land HLT works to protect.



Andrea Calouri

Michael: The Stevens property in Huntington and Westhampton is delightful. The rocky slopes around the small trail are wonderful in autumn, and I love taking long hikes around the larger loop. It’s also an excellent demonstration property for viewing the impacts of forestry, with different areas having been logged at different times. You can really see how the forest diversity is enhanced by forest management when it’s done in an appropriate manner.

continued next column

AmeriCorps Members, continued

4. What is your favorite type of tree and why?

Andrea: I’d say a Japanese maple. It was the only tree on my block where I grew up in the Bronx. It grew right in front of our house. I used to press its leaves and spend hours reading shaded by its branches. It was special to find a tranquil place in the big city.

Michael: A big, healthy, old growth beech is hard to beat, especially if it has bear claw marks in it. It’s amazing to be able to see a moment in time in the long, long history of the tree.

5. Tell us about a goal that you have for HLT.

Andrea: I hope to increase land conservation awareness through community engagement. I particularly hope to create events that will encourage new perspectives of the land and build a stronger relationship with it.

Michael: The goal of MassLIFT-ers all around the state is to build the capacity of the organizations we work for. If I can increase the ability of this organization to protect more land more effectively, I will have succeeded.



Chesterfield Gorge



East Branch ?

Nature, Food, Fun and Run! 11th Gorge après Gorge 5k Walk and Run

By Andrea Caluori-Rivera

Celebrate the land we love and spend time outdoors at the 11th annual Gorge après Gorge 5k trail run and free family fun walk! Run or walk along the East Branch of the Westfield River and enjoy the incredible splendor of the Chesterfield Gorge. After the race, everyone gathers to sip hot cocoa and partake in a community potluck. This year, Hilltown Land Trust joins event organizers Leslie Charles and Tanya Rapinchuk as a co-sponsor.



Gorge apres Gorge founders Leslie Charles and Tanya Rapinchuk

Captivated by the Gorge’s natural beauty on their weekly runs, Leslie and Tanya wanted to share their favorite running spot with neighbors, friends and fellow outdoor enthusiasts. They started Gorge après Gorge in order to give people the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors during a time of year when folks generally stay inside. The Chesterfield Gorge, a stunning 70-foot-high rock canyon,



provides visitors breathtaking views along the East Branch of the Westfield River. The Gorge après Gorge 5k is a great opportunity to discover and explore this special protected place with family and friends.

Throughout the years, Gorge après Gorge has become an annual tradition for hilltown residents. From the community potluck to the race prizes (hand-knitted hats!), the entire event has a warm, heartfelt spirit. “It’s a homegrown event to really benefit everybody,” says Charles, “it invites anyone and everyone to join in for a walk or run. It’s a total labor of love inspired by the desire to share the outdoors with our community, make new friends and gather together. We have hot chocolate and coffee, you bring treats and it’s a really fun time.”

This year Hilltown Land Trust is helping to organize Gorge après Gorge. Over the years, Leslie and Tanya have amassed a great following for the event, and HLT has plenty of skilled volunteers who can help. Additionally, the Chesterfield Gorge

is a property of our affiliate, The Trustees. Together we can grow Gorge après Gorge while keeping the workload fun and manageable for all.

Join us on November 29th for the 5K trail race or free family fun walk. The race begins at 9:30am and walkers start at 11am. The scenic course features a fairly flat fire road out and back along the East Branch of the Westfield River. After the race, stay for complimentary hot cocoa and the community potluck as we announce raffle prize winners in support of Hilltown Land Trust and land conservation.

Runners register at Runreg.com, walkers just need to show up! All are welcome, but no dogs please. Come spend time outdoors with friends, neighbors and future friends as we celebrate friendship and a special Hilltown place.

This event benefits Hilltown Land Trust and the Zephyr Rapinchuk Memorial Fund. Please contact Andrea Caluori-Rivera at Hilltown Land Trust for more information: hltoutreach@thetrusteess.org (413) 628-4485 ext.#3.



Après Race



Hand-Knit Prizes