

May 3rd is Valley Gives Day!

Hilltown Land Trust thrives thanks to the support of our community to protect the land we love and provide memorable experiences outdoors. On May 3rd, we will join hundreds of other nonprofits in Hampshire, Hampden, and Franklin Counties in a twenty four hour e-philanthropy event – Valley Gives Day.

Organized by the Community Foundation of Western MA, Valley Gives is a wonderful way to contribute to causes that you believe matter in your community. Thanks to generous sponsors and donors to Valley Gives, \$225,000 in unrestricted cash prizes and bonus matches will be given out to nonprofits that inspire the most donors and meet challenges to their donors.

Please include Hilltown Land Trust in the list of organizations you support on May 3rd! Know that your gift to Hilltown Land Trust makes a huge impact on the work we do! Donations help us protect more land and create engaging programs. Thanks to increased support from last year, our community program initiatives have doubled and we have conserved more land in the hilltowns – keeping our region green, healthy and preserved for future generations to enjoy.



Hilltown Land Trust Board of Directors

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Turkey Tail Mushroom
 Photo by Andrea Caluori-Rivera

HLT Protects 200 acres in Goshen

This spring, Hilltown Land Trust will be completing the many steps needed to permanently protect 200 acres of important forest land in Goshen. Landowner Gary Warner is donating a Conservation Restriction on 200 acres of his land on Route 9 and Mollison Hill Road. This property will become HLT's 32nd Conservation Restriction and the second property we have protected in Goshen.

The Warner land is part of an extensive block of undeveloped land bounded by Route 9, Route 112 and Sears Road. The property contains important habitat for rare and endangered species as well as buffer land to Sears Meadow, an extensive wetland identified by the MA Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program as BioMap II Core Habitat.

Much of the remaining work to permanently protect this land involves completing the Conservation Restriction document (which will dictate the terms of future use of this property) and developing a Baseline Documentation Report (BDR) that details the conditions of the land at the time it is protected.

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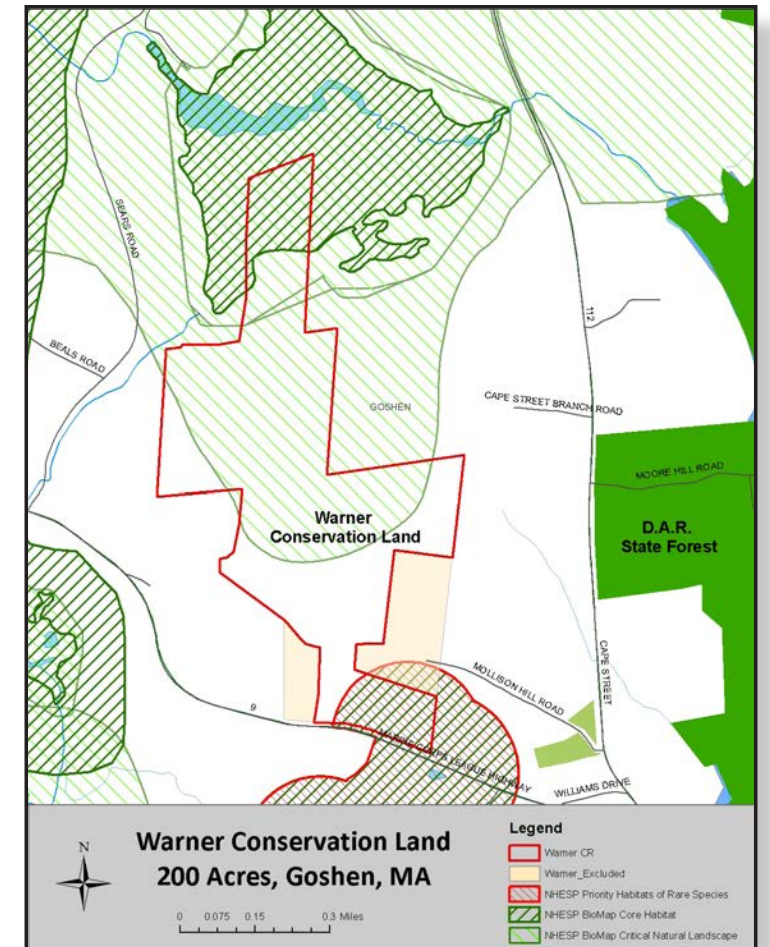
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Please make checks payable to **Hilltown Land Trust** and send to:
 Hilltown Land Trust • 332 Bullitt Road • Ashfield, MA 01330

Thank you for your support!



Volunteer Spotlight: Roan Katahdin

One of my favorite responsibilities as Hilltown Land Trust's MassLIFT Community Engagement Coordinator is attending the different workshops and events planned for each season. Although I wasn't the one to coordinate the Women's Wildlife Tracking



Roan Katahdin leading the Women's Wildlife Tracking Workshop at the William Cullen Bryant Homestead in Cummington, MA.

Workshop on March 12th at the William Cullen Bryant Homestead in Cummington, I was really looking forward to meeting hike leader Roan Katahdin and learning more about wildlife tracking – even without snow!

A Hilltown Land Trust volunteer and former student of tracking specialist Susan Morse, Roan guided a group of 15 women through the Bryant woods looking for prints, and evidence of “human tracks” – features that denote a human presence on the land. As we battled multiflora rose and spring mud, Roan pointed out wildlife prints in the mud, stonewalls, boundary sugar maples and evidence of a working agricultural landscape. By doing so, she helped us reconstruct a narrative between people and the land – another form of tracking that furthered our understanding of the land's history and our relationship with it.



Two hours later, a newly bonded community of women emerged from the woods to greet the mid-morning sun and ponder future tracking expeditions in the forest thanks to the knowledge Roan shared. I left the group impressed by Roan's expertise and in admiration of her enthusiasm to share what she has learned with fellow women environmentalists. Eager to know more about Roan's conservation background, I invited her for a coffee at the Creamery to talk a little bit more about her role as a conservationist in our hilltown communities.

Roan first became involved with Hilltown Land Trust as an outing participant. She valued HLT's land conservation work and volunteered for the Highlands Community Initiative. In addition to leading a workshop for us, she is also an HLT volunteer property monitor – one of her many local conservation activities! She has participated in the Massachusetts Keystone Project, an initiative that provides community members training as ambassadors of

continued next column

Volunteer Spotlight, continued

local land conservation and is also a part of the Berkshire Environmental Action Team. She conducts stream surveys of the Westfield River for the Wild & Scenic Westfield River Committee and also spent a winter walking up and down Route 112 doing a wildlife impact study for the Nature Conservancy! Talking to Roan, I was in awe of her active environmental work in our region and the strong commitment she has to local land protection and watershed conservation. So how did Roan become such a dedicated conservationist?

A resident of Worthington for over 30 years, Roan studied Spanish and Latin American Studies at the University of Massachusetts. She has lived all over South America and frequently visits Puerto Rico. In Bolivia, Roan witnessed how suburbanization negatively affects land and community but it wasn't until canoeing to an island off of Cape Cod that she understood the importance of conservation. Seeing the island full of stakes, marked for development, Roan knew she had to do something. She chose to live in the hilltowns of Western Massachusetts because of our remarkable woods, forests and waterways. Her conservation efforts are focused on preserving these special places. In fact, she mentioned that our local land's ecology contains more diversity than the Amazonian jungle – there is more diversity in our woods than anywhere else!

Now following in the footsteps of her grandmother, founder of Save the Bay in San Francisco, the first urban conservation association, Roan is a leading community ambassador for land conservation in the hilltowns. Her favorite hiking spot? Walking along the East Branch trail at the Chesterfield Gorge. Sitting at the Creamery, listening to her stories of hiking the Appalachian Trail, world travels, and environmental work, I was truly inspired. As a young woman in conservation, women like Roan motivate me to keep doing the work I do with dedication, enthusiasm and perseverance. Her advice? The same her grandmother gave her in regards to her own environmental work: “do it one foot at a time.” Thanks to HLT volunteers like Roan, we continue to protect more land in our region and nurture a deep appreciation for the land we love.



*Patten Road Beaver Pond: Spring
Photo by Carol Wasserloos
Fall 2015 2nd Place Photo Contest Winner*

Affiliation in Action: Summer Programs & New Stewardship App

This winter, Hilltown Land Trust AmeriCorps volunteers have been busy with the planning of some new and exciting summer programs as well as developing a new stewardship app for mobile devices.

Inspired by the rich artistic tradition in the hilltowns, Hilltown Land Trust and The Trustees have partnered to offer two plein air painting workshops with Cummington painter, Paula Gottlieb. These workshops will be held at The Bullitt Reservation in Ashfield and the William Cullen Bryant Homestead in Cummington in July and August. Both workshops highlight the historic significance of our land's aesthetic and community's cultural heritage.

All artists are welcome to join local landscape painter Paula Gottlieb as she teaches how to engage the summer landscape through perspective, color, and composition. Participants will have time to sketch and paint throughout the afternoon and receive individual feedback. Open to anyone who has experience painting in any medium. Bring your own painting materials, a sketchbook and pencil. More information will be available on our website as we get closer to the dates.

Meanwhile in the land stewardship realm, HLT's MassLIFT AmeriCorps member Michael Madole has been working with The Trustees to design a mobile conservation monitoring form in an app called Fulcrum. Rather than using a pen and paper, GPS unit, and camera separately, the app uses the ability of a smartphone or tablet to take on the role of all three. The user can fill out the digital form and note their location in the field for any issues without needing cell signal. Once the staff member or volunteer gets access to the internet, they can upload that signed official form directly to the Trustees database. It also lets Trustees staff see at a glance which properties still need to be monitored in a given year; a real benefit when you're working with 400 different conservation restrictions! Hilltown Land Trust also plans to use this system for monitoring our growing list of protected lands.

All in all, it's been a busy winter season in the office here at the Bullitt Reservation! We look forward to more exciting collaborations with our affiliate The Trustees in the future.



Barn at the William Cullen Bryant Homestead, Cummington



*David Fisher of Natural Roots Farm & his draft horses at HLT's Horse-logging demonstration in February
Photo by Dorothy Barnard*