



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



## Vernal Pool Workshop & Exploration

Recently, Hilltown Land Trust and The Trustees of Reservations collaborated on a free community event focused on vernal pool ecology. This two part series began with an evening presentation on vernal pool identification, ecology, and certification. The second part of the series was focused on hands-on interaction with a vernal pool in Williamsburg MA. On Saturday May 4, over 20 participants explored this amazing wetland wildlife habitat with the assistance of UMass Extension professor Scott Jackson. Vernal pools are beyond amazing. The life that is sustained in these pools is awe-inspiring. We must continue to cherish these incredible wildlife habitats.



Top - Professor Scott Jackson, UMass  
 Left - Spotted Salamander Eggs



Joy Hill Farm- unmowed

## Lincoln Fish Moves On, 27 Years Later

When Lincoln Fish was 10 years old, he noticed in the wetlands of his hometown, Needham, MA, that a new purple flower was blooming everywhere. It was the only swamp flower he could see. Linc learned later that the purple loosestrife was an invader, had driven out native plants and had no biotic use for any local birds, animals or insects.



Backyard Sugaring- 2013

This image came back to him 40 years later.

Early in those 40 years, Linc had become an environmental educator after completing a special program offered by Lycoming College (Williamsport, PA) and the Forestry School of Duke University (Durham, NC). Or so he had thought. He found no such jobs available in the Duke area so took a classroom job in Durham's middle schools, where he lasted three years. "I never caught the hang of crowd control" he professes.

Moving to - Williamsburg, Lincoln rented then later purchased the house his grandparents had built, read "What Color Is Your Parachute" and began a series of "informational interviews" to discover the range of local opportunities open to him. Violating one of Parachute's Rules, he immediately accepted the offer from Bay State Forestry made to him during his interview and has been a part of that company ever since.

An early frustration with forestry work in the 1980's for Linc was seeing forests he had painstakingly thinned and fussed over be sold for a huge amount of money and chopped into house lots, obliterating the effort he had applied. During the mid 1980's he encountered forestry clients who wanted to preserve their land as conservation

*continued*



Explaining logging plan. Pisgah Road, Huntington

## JOIN US

Ask a friend or two or three to join us, too. Better yet, give them the gift of a membership to The Hilltown Land Trust.

**Hilltown Land Trust**  
 332 Bullitt Road  
 Ashfield, MA 01330

- \$35 per year
- \$50 per year
- \$100 per year
- \$250 per year
- \$500 per year
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (other) per year

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_





*A few dozen mowers.*

## A Marriage Made in Heaven-ly Fields

It started with a chance meeting at a party. A new couple, Alicia and Ross Hackerson, had just moved to Huntington with a desire to farm. They cleared some land, naming their new place Gray Dog Farm, but still needed more land to pasture goats, sheep and chickens. That’s when they met Ruth Pardoe, one of HLT’s first conservation restriction landowners. Ruth had fields in her CR that she had been trying to find a cost effective way to keep open. And so a deal was struck, a marriage made, that gives Grey Dog Farm access to approximately six acres of affordable agricultural land (Ruth receives a chicken a month for use of her land) and Ruth has a reliable partner who keeps her fields open and her views accessible.

Currently there are 10 movable chicken coops on the land. Robin Weeks, Gray Dog’s farm manager, comes by every few days to move the coops. “I love seeing the brilliant green plants emerging where the coops have been” said Ruth recently. “The stubborn brambles are slowly being replaced by good meadow grasses. This property was originally a farm run by the Joy family back in the 1930s and 1940s. That’s why we named the property Joy Hill. Growing up I remember seeing cows on this land. I am so happy to see it being farmed again. Recently Robin had the soil tested where the chicken coops had been last year. The results show that the ground has now become good agriculture soil.”

Gray Dog Farm is now a meat CSA offering chicken, pork, beef, goat and lamb and eggs. Visit them online at [www.graydogfarm.com](http://www.graydogfarm.com).

Most of HLT’s protected lands are working lands with provisions for active forest management and agriculture. Among the properties HLT has protected are a blueberry and vegetable farm in Worthington (Running Fox Farm), Kinnebrook farm raising beef cattle and pigs also in Worthington and Taproot Commons farm selling raw milk and free range eggs in Cummington. In addition, many landowners such as Ruth Pardoe have arrangements where neighboring farmers hay their fields, tap their trees or graze livestock on their land.

HLT hopes to foster more of these advantageous partnerships between CR holders (and other landowners) in the hilltowns and individuals wishing to farm who need access to arable land. If you would like to know more please contact HLT’s Land Steward, Matthias Nevins at [hlklandsteward@ttor.org](mailto:hlklandsteward@ttor.org)



*A mobile home for goats.*

### *Fish (cont’d)*

legacies. He briefly considered, then abandoned, the idea of living forever, and instead substituted a means of enabling the woodlots he worked on to continue in perpetuity. Joining with Denise Cormier of Chesterfield and Eric Weber of Williamsburg, as well as others, he organized what became Hilltown Land Trust. His first save (with assists by Terry Blunt and The Nature Conservancy) was the Breckenridge Preserve on Old Goshen Road in Williamsburg, bringing dream fulfillment to Mrs. Breckenridge. Doing so became Linc’s dream as well. To this he added what he calls eco-forestry, where forestry work could support environment improvement for native animals, plants and insects, and perhaps provide funds with which to help purchase conservation land interests.



*Jennifer and Lincoln Fish*

Lincoln later realized that good forestry must sometimes be accompanied by invasive plant control, or else run the risk of spreading multiflora rose, oriental bittersweet, garlic mustard, glossy buckthorn and their like, which could undo the success of his clients’ forestry goals. He started with the modest goal of providing invasive plant control for his own forestry clients, but the program soon got out of hand and took over his life. Thus he became “Captain Invasivescourge”. Asked whether he thought his contest for the largest dead bittersweet vine might encourage people to plant more bittersweet to collect prizes, he said “Not a chance. It would take much too long.”

After 27 years on the Board of Hilltown Land Trust, Linc has stepped down, but he will continue to be involved in new land conservation projects for HLT. Marie Burkart, Hilltown’s President, thanked Linc for his long years of work and called him an “ardent and awesome land conservationist.”

*Wil Hastings*

## Affiliation in Action: The Trustees of Reservations adds 26 Acres to Bear Swamp Reservation

The affiliation between The Trustees of Reservations and Hilltown Land Trust enables both organizations to do more land protection work in the Hilltowns. This spring, The Trustees will add 26 acres to Bear Swamp Reservation in Ashfield thanks to the generosity of the Walker family who are donating a portion of their family land at the corner of Bear Swamp and Hawley Roads. Jim Caffrey, TTOR Windsor/Williamstown Superintendent, notes “This is a logical addition to Bear Swamp and part of Phil Steinmetz’s original vision for the Reservation. The property contains important habitat and we are delighted to see it protected.” Another land protection effort coming out of the HLT - TTOR affiliation was the addition of 3 acres along Clark Wright Road to Glendale Falls Reservation in Middlefield last December. This property donation by Elizabeth Merritt ensures protection of both sides of Glendale Brook, a federally designates wild and scenic stream. Both of these projects were led by HLT’s Executive Director, Sally Loomis, who also serves as Community Conservation Coordinator for The Trustees.

## Hilltown Hikes Continue to Attract Crowds

For many, the Hilltowns are well loved for the wealth of highly accessible and peaceful recreational opportunities. There is a patchwork of trail systems that weave through the public and private lands of our towns. Hilltown Land Trust (HLT) has played an important role in ensuring the continued public access to some of these unique and loved places.

HLT currently owns and manages four properties, three of which offer public hiking trails. These properties are managed for wildlife habitat, watershed protection, and public recreation and afford wonderful opportunities for hikers and explorers of any age and ability. HLT has traditionally led guided hikes on these properties to highlight the special features and management practices. In November of last year we had over 20 hikers join us on the Stevens property on Pisgah Road in Huntington for an enjoyable hike through the glacial boulder fields that characterize the slopes of Mt. Pisgah. In March another large group of community members donned snowshoes to explore the Breckenridge Sanctuary off of old Goshen Road in Williamsburg. This property is bounded on three sides by Blake Brook and the West Branch of the Mill River and has amazing hiking opportunities year round. In April, another group walked the outer loop trail on the Bradley Sanctuary in Williamsburg, stopping frequently to admire Nichols Brook and the many spring ephemerals that lined its bank.

Some of HLT’s Conservation Restriction properties (permanently protected lands that remain in private ownership) also have public trails. On June 1st, we are leading a family-friendly hike to the waterfall at the back of the old Warner Farm, now Taproot Commons Farm on Porter Hill Road. This morning hike is a lovely warm-up for the Hilltown Spring Festival happening that day at the Cummington Fairgrounds across the street.

To access historical information and descriptive maps of all HLT properties we encourage you to visit our website at [hilltown-land-trust.org](http://hilltown-land-trust.org). For the most up to date information on summer hikes and events follow us on Facebook/[hilltownlandtrust](https://www.facebook.com/hilltownlandtrust) or visit our website.



*What Lives in a Vernal Pool?*