



Greenprint

NEWS of the North County Land Trust

SUMMER 2015



Committed To Conservation...

North County Land Trust, Inc. (NCLT) is a non-profit land conservation organization working in north central Massachusetts to serve the diverse needs of our communities.

Our mission is to conserve the farms, forests and landscapes that define the character of our region.

Promoting Local Agriculture

A New England Food Vision

On May 16, 2015, NCLT Directors, Members and Friends gathered at the Fitchburg Art Museum for a presentation by Brian Donahue, co-author of “A New England Food Vision”, which imagines a future in which local agriculture provides 50% of the food consumed in New England. Professor Donahue, who is both a farmer and Director of the Environmental Studies Department at Brandeis University, explained how a sustainable regional agricultural economy



can be developed, by promoting and expanding local agricultural production. Executive Director, Janet Morrison followed with a brief overview of NCLT’s work in farmland conservation, which is the foundation of the resurgence of local agriculture in our region.

More than 70 guests enjoyed wine, hors d’oeuvres and a brief tour of the Museum galleries, before the presentation.

Farmland Access Committee

NCLT has joined other conservation organizations across the state to develop better methods to help young farmers access available farmland. The problem of farm succession is complex, involving aging farmers seeking to “cash out” the value of their farmland, young farmers who cannot afford to buy expensive farmland and pressure to convert farmland to residential and commercial uses. The Farmland Access Committee is an offshoot of Pioneer Valley Grows (PVG), a group which promotes agriculture in the Connecticut River Valley, the site of the richest farmland in Massachusetts. The long and successful history of agriculture in this region can provide a model for the resurgence of agriculture in the hills and valleys of north central Mass., where local dairies and truck farms thrived just a few generations ago.

In North Central Massachusetts

NCLT's Farmland Inventory Project

We are continuing to work with local Agricultural Commissions in our Focus Area on our Farmland Inventory Project. The project involves mapping farms and farmland in each community, showing areas of prime agricultural soils, and mapping farm fields using aerial photography. The maps we create will be used to develop additional data about farm ownership and agricultural production in each community. The Farmland Inventory Project is helping Town residents and leaders to better understand the role of agriculture in the local economy and the importance of conserving local farmland.

Students from Fitchburg State University are mapping farm fields in our Focus Area communities, as part of a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) class project. FSU students, Laura Leclerc, Tristan Taylor and Robin Pike are shown here after a presentation of their work.



Central Mass. Grown

North County Land Trust is a partner in a new “buy local” initiative to promote local agriculture in central Massachusetts. Central Mass. Grown (CMG) connects local farmers and producers to stores and restaurants, and promotes the value of local food to consumers. So far this year, NCLT has sponsored CMG outreach events in Fitchburg and Gardner, at which local agriculture producers and sellers can learn more about CMG and consider becoming a CMG member.



NCLT's AmeriCorps Member, Desiree Hamelin designed the CMG logo, shown here at Meadowbrook Orchards, a CMG member in Sterling.

North County Land Trust at Work in the Community

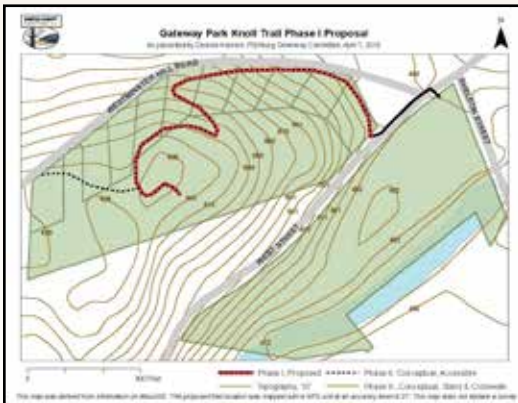
Gateway Park

In Fitchburg, NCLT and the Fitchburg Greenway Committee (Chaired by NCLT Executive Director, Janet Morrison) have helped to guide the City toward a future where the once-polluted Nashua River, and the surrounding hills have become one of its biggest assets. Beginning in 2009, with the purchase of 5.5 acres on the Nashua River, and the completion of “Gateway Park” in 2011, the protection and promotion of the City’s natural resources has resulted in the successful renovation of an old mill into a 176-unit residential development. Gateway Park is a public amenity for residents of Riverside Commons.



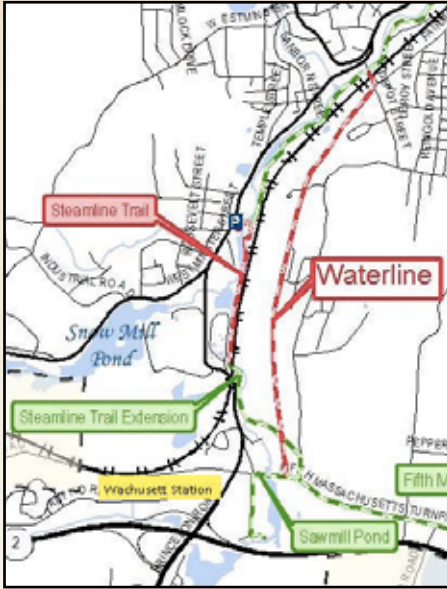
The Knoll Trails

This year, NCLT and the Fitchburg Greenway Committee (FGC) have nearly completed a trail to the top of the “Knoll”, a 7 acre parcel which NCLT and the FGC helped the City to purchase and which is now a part of Gateway Park. The trail project was managed by NCLT’s AmeriCorps member, Desiree Hamelin and the trail was constructed with the help of a work crew from the Worcester County Sheriff’s Department.



Public Parks and Trails Help Local Economies

Waterline Connector Trail



NCLT and the Fitchburg Greenway Committee are eagerly awaiting a decision on our efforts to obtain a state grant that would help pay for the construction of a 1.4 mile trail connecting the neighborhoods of West Fitchburg to Wachusett Station, an extension of the commuter rail line from Boston located at the intersections of Routes 2 and 31. This trail, which would run alongside an underground City waterline, would provide safe pedestrian and bicycle access to the station.

Twin Cities Rail Trail

More than 30 years in the making, it now looks like the Twin Cities Rail Trail will finally become a reality. This 5 mile trail will link the cities of Fitchburg and Leominster, from the Fitchburg Train Station to Carter Park in Leominster. The trail will be constructed on a rail bed which runs parallel to Route 12. As a member of the Twin Cities Rail Trail Association, NCLT is working to insure the release of federal funds to purchase the rail bed and to secure sufficient additional funding to construct the rail trail.



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Capacity Building Grant Awarded

In June, NCLT Executive Director, Janet Morrison and President, Alan Rousseau accepted a grant of \$12,500 from the Community Foundation of North Central Mass. to help us implement our Fundraising Plan. This is the 2nd Capacity Building grant we have received from the Community Foundation.



Save the Dates!

Saturday, September 26th Join us on for a hike on the trails of NCLT's Dwelly Farm in Templeton. Meet at the Dwelly Farm field at the intersection of Barre and Henshaw Roads: 12:30 – Review of Dwelly Farm history; 1:00 PM – 1 mile hike through woods and fields.

Friday, October 2nd This year our Annual Meeting is at the Westminster Farmers' Market on the Old Common, Academy Hill St. The program starts at 4:00 PM.



Your Membership Makes a Difference!

North County Land Trust depends on membership dues and contributions to fund our operating budget, environmental programs, stewardship of our conservation areas and our land protection work. Please take a moment to make a contribution and join us in the important work we do.

Membership Levels	Amount
Individual	\$25 & Up
Family	\$50 & Up
Business	\$150 & Up
Sustaining	Monthly \$10 & Up

Name: _____

Address: _____

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Contributions are tax-deductible as allowed by law.

Mail to: North County Land Trust, 325 Lindell Ave, Leominster MA 01453

For more information please contact Janet Morrison, Executive Director
(978) 466-3900; jmorrison@northcountylandtrust.org

You can also join online at:

<http://www.northcountylandtrust.org/membership.html>



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