

A Broad Vision for a Resilient New England

In 2010, a collection of researchers and practitioners led by Harvard Forest Director, David Foster, released a novel report, which laid out a clear and compelling vision for conserving 30 million acres of forest by the year 2060. The report, Wildlands and Woodlands, was a call to action for conservationists across New England. In September of this year, Foster and colleagues released the third edition of their groundbreaking report. The new edition, Wildlands and Woodlands, Farmlands and Communities: Broadening the Vision for New England, checks in on progress against the 30 million acre goal, and broadens the original vision to include connections between forest and farmland conservation and the health and vitality of New England's cities and towns.

This new report is the most up-to-date and comprehensive synthesis available for understanding regional land use changes and patterns. Despite some concerning recent trends, the authors assert that the bold vision for the New England landscape, as originally presented, is still attainable. Furthermore, they outline current opportunities for advancing the vision to the 2060 goal.

The report documents that public funding for land conservation dropped 50 percent between 2008 and 2014 to \$62 million per year, slightly lower than 2004 levels. The pace of regional land conservation has also slowed substantially from an average of 333,000 acres per year in the early 2000s to about 50,000 acres per year since 2010. In Massachusetts, 7,000 acres of forestland are lost each year to development, an area equivalent to over 20x Bare Hill Pond. Annual land conservation rates in Massachusetts have been declining in recent years after a period of elevated conservation in the early and late 2000s. Looking at these trends, researchers conclude that conversion to development is still the biggest near-term threat to the forests and farmland; bigger even than climate change.

The good news is that, despite these trends, the authors say it is still possible to attain

the Wildlands and Woodland vision by (1) tripling the pace of conservation, (2) reversing trends in public funding, (3) putting more land to work for sustainable farming and forestry, and (4) integrating land conservation with the planning of cities, suburbs, and rural communities to reduce forest loss and promote more efficient use of land for economic development.

The report emphasizes that conserved land is a low-cost natural asset to confront challenges like climate change and support resource-based economies. "Today's land conservation is about putting land to work to solve problems and provide an economic return to landowners while investing in nature," said Kathy Lambert, head of the Science & Policy Project at the Harvard Forest.

The report points to hopeful signs including (1) the region's long tradition of public investment in land conservation; (2) the emerging capacity of regional conservation

partnerships that have increased four-fold since 2000; and (3) the expansion of conservation finance strategies such as the adoption of the Community Preservation Act by 11 Massachusetts cities and towns last year, bringing the statewide total to 173 – approximately half of the state's cities and towns.

The authors highlight that the gains from achieving the updated Wildlands and Woodlands vision in the new report would be significant and widespread. Foster concludes, "Investing in land protection and supporting people to steward their land responsibly offers a path to ecological and economic well-being that can benefit all of New England."

HCT Thanks Ryan Williams

Madigan Lane resident and college student Ryan Williams spent the larger portion of his summer interning for HCT. Having an Environmental Studies major at Saint Michael's College in Colchester Vermont was a perfect fit with the Trust.

Ryan cut a new access trail to land on East Bare Hill Road that now connects to the Bolton Loop Trail – a miles-long series of trails that can take you all the way to Bolton Center and beyond. The new trailhead can be found between #159 and #171 East Bare Hill Rd. Look for the HCT sign about 30' in. The first 100' of the trail is covered with wood chips to keep the weeds down until the trail is better trodden. Get on it!

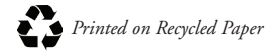
The need to better map the trail system on Town Conservation and Trust land has been an important objective of the Land Stewardship team for quite some time. Ryan has recorded GPS tracks covering a great deal of trails in town. This data will be used to produce a comprehensive mapping effort moving forward and this data gathering is the critical step needed to make that happen. Getting all of the town's trails digitized, recorded and accessible for desktops and mobile devices for use in the field will modernize our aging trail maps, which are hand-drawn, and becoming outdated. Though some of us hold a special place in our hearts (and on our shelves!) for the charming trail booklets.



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Would you Like to Become a Member? Need to Renew?

Yes, I want to preserve the unique character of the town of Harvard by joining the Harvard Conservation Trust.

Membership is on a calendar-year basis and is tax deductible. Make check payable to "Harvard Conservation Trust" and send to P.O. Box 31, Harvard, MA 01451, or save a stamp— *Go Green*— and renew or join online at <http://harvardconservationtrust.org/join/>.

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If your employer will match your contribution, please enclose the application form.

___ YES! I would like to make a donation to the Muller Conservation Collaborative Fund - please contact me!

HCT is volunteer driven organization that is always looking for people to help. If you would like to volunteer, please check area of interest:

Land Protection	Stewardship	
___ legal	___ trail maintenance	___ event planning
Operations	___ land monitoring	___ membership
___ finance	Outreach and Education	___ publicity
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*Membership is open to all. To join the Trust, send
your tax-deductible check for dues with the
remittance at the back page of this Legacy Review.
Alternatively, renew or join online.*

Take the Trail Challenge

Anyone interested in taking the trail challenge should visit the Trust's web-site at HarvardConservationTrust.org for details.

Fall 2017

Harvard Conservation Trust Legacy Review

New England Wildflower Society Inventories Horse Meadows Knoll

On August 6, the New England Wildflower Society's Advanced Botanical Inventory class visited the Horse Meadows Knoll property on Sherry Road, the most recent addition to the Trust's inventory of permanently protected lands. Ted Elliman, a plant ecologist at the New England Wildflower Society in Framingham directed the survey performed by Ted and 7 class participants for about 6 hours. They surveyed most of the property – from the lower slopes near the road, the upper slopes and rock ledges and the pond borders to the west.

Over 140 species were identified, even though the ephemeral plants of spring had long disappeared. According to Ted: "... another survey day earlier in the season would, I believe, push that number over 200."

"One day can provide a broad picture, but one would have to survey at different times in the growing season (spring and late summer/early fall as well as mid-summer) to get a full catalogue of the property's



Mike Ball, Ted Elliman, and Brian Collier examine round-fruited rosette-panicgrass (*Dichanthelium spaerocarpon*) - photo courtesy of Thomas Rhodes

flora. In general, the lower slopes near Sherry Road had the most diversity, not surprising since the soils are moist and quite rich. The upper slopes were less diverse, overall, but the ledges were fascinating. We did not find any rare flora on the ledges, but I would not rule out the possibility, and they should be checked again. One of the more interesting plants found on the ledges was wild columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*), which indicates nutrient richness in at least some of the ledges."

The Trust is pleased to have received the inventory of plants and thanks the New England Wildflower Society for this contribution, which adds to our understanding of the unique characteristics of this site.



Indian Pipe (*Monotropa uniflora*)
photo courtesy of Thomas Rhodes

The New England Wildflower Society in Framingham has one of the largest programs in native plant education in the country. Their mission is to "conserve and promote the region's native plants to ensure healthy, biologically diverse landscapes."

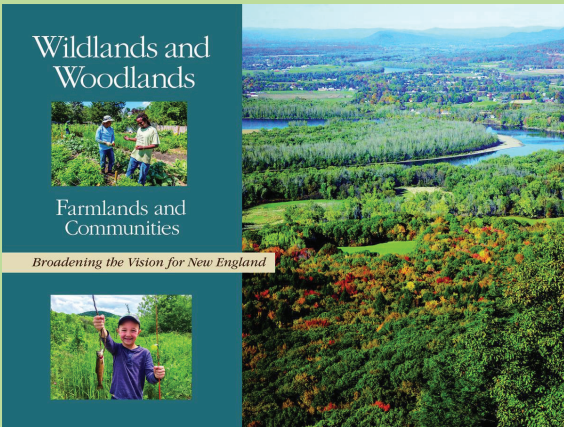
You are invited to HCT’s Annual Meeting November 16, 2017 – please join us!

The evening will feature a presentation by Jim Levitt from the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, and co-author of a newly released report, *Wildlands and Woodlands, Farmlands and Communities*:

Broadening the Vision for New England, from the Harvard [University] Forest.

HCT’s Annual Meeting is free and open to the public, and will be held at the **Harvard Historical Society meeting house, at 215 Still River Road on Thursday November 16th from 7:00 to 9:00 pm.**

Jim Levitt is the manager of land conservation programs in the Department of Planning and Urban Form at the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, and director of the Program on Conservation Innovation at the Harvard Forest, Harvard University, in Petersham, Massachusetts. In addition, he holds ongoing fellowships at the Harvard Kennedy School and at



Highstead, a non-profit organization advancing land conservation in New England. Levitt focuses on landmark innovations in the field of land and biodiversity conservation, and has written and edited dozens of articles and four books on conservation.

The presentation will be followed by light refreshments, including homemade gingerbread, fresh apple cider, and good cheer. Bring a friend!



Muller Conservation Collaborative Dedicated to Land Protection

HCT Founding Member Erhart Muller was instrumental in

protecting several of Harvard's most valued conservation lands and his passing in 2015 was not the end of his legacy of protecting land. Mr Muller bequeathed \$1.5M dedicated to adding to the inventory of permanently protected parcels in town, matched 1:1 for those who earmark their HCT donation for land protection efforts. This gift was the basis for the formation of the Muller Conservation Collaborative whose mission is to strategically protect land in Harvard for the greatest ecological and community benefit. In addition to the 1:1 match for individual gifts, we will also leverage public funding and foundation grants whenever possible.

Preserving Harvard’s natural resources and unique character is about more than

Note from the Executive Director

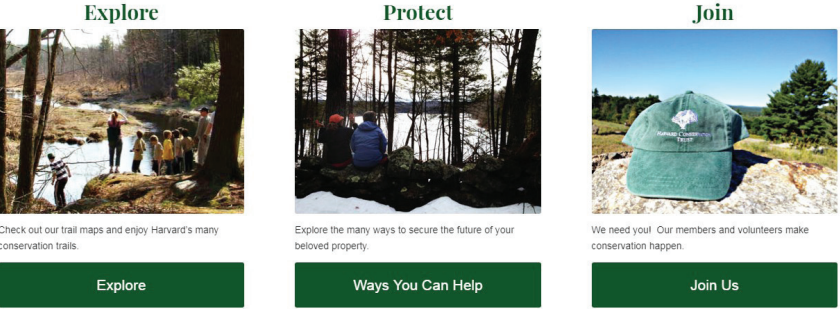
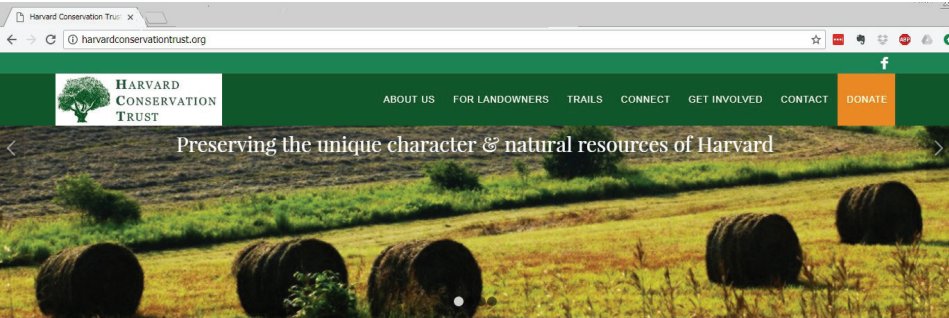


Land protection – what does it mean? Commonly, land protection denotes acts taken by landowners or organizations, like the Harvard Conservation Trust, to assure that a parcel of land is not converted from a natural or agricultural condition to some other use, such as houses, a shopping center, or a gravel pit.

By acquiring land or development rights through purchase or gift, and then keeping the parcel as forest, meadow, or farmland in perpetuity, it is thus “protected” for the common good of people, plants, and animals. In truth, a better understanding of land protection may be one that makes land the subject instead of the object. Whereby protection is not what we do to land, but the security and well-being that land and its denizens provide to us. For it is the forest and trees that moderate summer's heat with shade and the cooling effect of transpiration. It is the wetlands and riparian zones that absorb excess storm water from extreme weather events and mitigate flooding, while filtering and recharging our water supply. It is the grasslands, orchards, and farm fields that are the foundation of our local food system and agricultural economy. And it is the verdant hilltop vistas, birdsong, and outdoor experiences that invigorate our minds and bodies. I hope you will generously support land protection in Harvard, knowing the security and well-being provided in return is irreplaceable. -DFO

Be a part of the Muller Conservation Collaborative – for the good of land and community! For more information, or to discuss your contribution to this legacy, please contact us.

Check out our new web site! HarvardConservationTrust.org



HCT is pleased to have recently rolled out its new web site. The layout and design is easier to navigate, friendlier, and looks great! In addition to automatically adjusting the display for desktop, tablet and mobile devices, the underlying platform enables greater flexibility in making updates and changes with ease, with no further need to rely on a third party. We are happy with the results of the effort and hope you are too. Take a look at www.harvardconservationtrust.org and give us your feedback. And while you are there, you can link to our Facebook page and Instagram account.

See something that you want to share? Animal sighting? Brilliant tree fungus? Leaves ablaze? Post your images to Instagram and mention @harvardconservationtrust in your comment to share it with the community.

Community Connections at the Farmers Market



The Trust's new Facebook Page!

Please “Like” [facebook.com/HarvardConservationTrust](https://www.facebook.com/HarvardConservationTrust) and keep on top of what is happening with the Trust. Events will be posted and updates on land protection projects and more will keep you connected.

Our land. Our Legacy.

In belonging to a landscape, one feels a rightness, an at-homeness, a knitting of self and world. — *Scott Russell Sanders*

Explore the trails!

Call us or send an email message if you're looking for:

Trail Guides \$10
(also at the Harvard General Store)
HCT baseball caps \$20

We're at:
102 Prospect Hill Road
(Fruitland's Museum)
978-456-9292org

HCT was delighted to be invited by the Harvard Farmers Market to share our work with market-goers under HFM's new "community tent." A warm sunny day at the market served as a fine venue to connect with residents and conservationists from surrounding communities to share our latest efforts. We enjoyed seeing familiar and new faces! As the bumper sticker says, "No Farms, No Food", but perhaps it should say, "No Land, No Farms, No Food"? Thanks to our friends at HFM, and we look forward to next year!

Matthew Cronin of Bolton Road signs up as a new member with help from Teresa Garti and Britt Argow at the Harvard Farmers Market

Eagle Scout Will Hopper's Contribution to our Trail network



Ohlin Land Bridge under construction (left), completed bridge (right)– Photo Courtesy of David Hopper

A jewel in the Trust’s collection of trails, the Ohlin Land is nestled between Littleton Road, Poor Farm Road and Route 2. If you have not visited this trail yet, you are in for a treat. Not only does the property have beautiful views, it offers a variety of flat and steep areas for all walking levels. Although the trail begins with a steep stretch down, the views along the loop are well worth the walk back up.

This trail has recently been enhanced by the addition of a new footbridge. Eagle Scout Will Hopper designed and constructed the new footbridge that connects the section of hilly outcroppings with the loop section that offers stunning water views of Bowers Brook.

One Saturday morning in June, Hopper lead a team of 14 members of Boy Scout Troop 1 Harvard to construct the bridge. The bridge is about a quarter mile down the trail off the street. The scouts carried in

the construction materials to the site and completed the bridge in one morning. The bridge solves the problem of crossing an intermittent stream and rocky stretch of the trail and makes it easier to get to the trail loop. The loop is the highlight of the trail, which overlooks a beautiful and scenic section of Bowers Brook. The bridge also serves as a memorial to Hans and Natalie Ohlin, former neighbors of Hopper, who donated the land to the HCT. Hans Ohlin purchased 60 acres of land in 1947, a few years after returning from WWII. In 1993 the Ohlins donated 25 acres of that land to the Trust. The trail that exists today is a perfect example of preserving the natural resources of Harvard. The trailhead can be found on the right side of Ohlin Lane, just off Poor Farm Road.

For a detailed map, please see http://harvardconservationtrust.org/maps/ohlin_land.pdf

The Harvard Conservation Trust welcomes and thanks our newest members!

Ben Alexander | Paul Chiou | Michelle E.K. Chung | Matthew Cronin | Gaye Johnson Ronald Kehney | Peter Kelly-Joseph | Shane Long | Roderick Lorente | Erin McBee Susana Ottowitz | Mya Poe and John Cogan | Pat and Carl Sciple | Sharon Soong and Edward Lyon | Tania Ward

Become a member online at: www.harvardconservationtrust.org/membership.htm

Appreciating a commitment to conservation . . . **Won't you join us?**

Run for the Hills



"The annual Run-For-The-Hills event took place on October 22. See www.harvardraces.org for the results.

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