



Franklin Land Trust NEWS

SUSTAINABILITY STARTS HERE



Photo: Alain Peleroy

Forever Blueberries

Benson Place APR Protects Land, Ensures Access

Franklin Land Trust wrapped up the 2010 fiscal year with a project high in the hills of Heath that's good news for blueberry lovers and outdoor enthusiasts, as well as land conservationists. FLT assisted Benson Place owners Dave Gott and Ted Watt with the state APR process, using funds from our "Heath Fund" for project costs and local match requirements, to protect 35 acres of scenic and productive blueberry heath.

FLT land staff also worked with Dave and Ted to complete a trail easement that provides permanent public access along farm roads with beautiful vistas, historical sites and lovely stone walls. We are continuing to work with them to protect the remaining 20 acres of woodland just south of the APR and trail easement area.

The Benson Place is already a favorite destination for those seeking organic low bush

blueberries and blueberry products: after travelling the steep and twisty roads that lead to the farm, many people opt to grab a blueberry rake, walk out to the heath, pick a box or two of berries, and enjoy the farm's stunning landscape and long views.

The Benson Place also has an interesting history: the property was originally owned by Roswell and Florence Tripp, who used it as a summer home. When it burned to the ground the artist Robert Strong Woodward built a rustic studio in the open field, where there was a spectacular view and a lone wind-blown beech tree that became the subject of many of his paintings. The Benson Place now has a permanent display of the history of Woodward's tenure on the property and is happy to share that with visitors who call ahead for an appointment.

Dave and Ted have always encouraged visitors to enjoy their land, but now that access will be guaranteed in perpetuity.

Dave and Ted were deeply engaged and committed to this project, and had this to say about the process:

"We are tremendously grateful to Alain, Rich and all at FLT for their wisdom, experience, persistence and flexibility during the process of putting in place an APR and trail easement at the Benson Place. Similar thanks to Rick Chandler of MDAR, Attorney David Singer, and Land Consultant Pete Westover.

We grappled with the long term impacts of using private land for public good. How could we create a welcoming arrangement that would also respect farm integrity, resident and neighbor privacy, access to historical features, and the management of potential conflicts? After more visits, emails, and conversations than we can count, we think we came up with something that we expect will allow this beautiful, serene, and productive land to be preserved and shared for years to come."

Additional financial support is needed to complete the process to preserve this property. You can send your tax-deductible gifts referencing "The Benson Place" to the Franklin Land Trust. Donors who give \$250 or more receive a hand-blown glass blueberry vase courtesy of Heath artist Bob Dane.

A raffle is also being organized in conjunction with Moonlight Magic in Shelburne Falls November 26. Raffle prizes include a custom "Forever Farmland" fly fishing rod made by Dave Turner, a painting by Heath artist Fred Burrington, and a weekend at the Blueberry Cottage at the Benson Place. The drawing will take place in early December.

Look for more details about the raffle and upcoming events celebrating the trail easement at our web site: <http://www.franklinlandtrust.org>, and at the Benson Place web site: <http://www.bensonplace.org>.

The Franklin Land Trust is a non-profit organization that assists farmers and other landowners who want to protect their land from unwanted development. FLT does not seek to own land, but instead encourages private stewardship. We celebrate the landscape, history and rural culture of western Massachusetts and work to ensure, through a program of land protection, that the historic pattern of field, woodland and village will endure for the benefit of generations to come. Contributions to FLT are tax-deductible.

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- Linda Alvord**
Member Services
- Will Anderson**
Land Steward
- Amy Dryansky**
Communications & Grants
- Paul Gagnon**
Land Protection Specialist
- Florence Hebert**
Office Manager & Bookkeeper
- Alain Peteroy**
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- Mary Lynn Sabourin**
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FROM THE PRESIDENT—CHARLIE COHN

The weather this year is reminiscent of the tale of the farmer whose horse ran off— bad news—then returns with a herd of horses— good news. The farmer’s son rides one of the horses, falls off and breaks a leg—bad news—all of the healthy young men in the village are conscripted, except the son with the broken leg—good news. Etc., etc., etc.

For us, it’s been a hot and dry summer: the peaches have been sensational, but the diminished apple crop, following an early blossoming and late frost, is ripening too fast and dropping. The weather’s been great for haying, but there was no rain in June so the hay crop wasn’t up to snuff. The foliage is beginning to show signs of rare brilliance, but driving by Wheelview farm I noticed that the watering pond in the mowing below the house is beginning to look like the Great Salt Lake. What effect will all this have, if any, on the sugaring season? Plenty to talk about!

Fortunately, FLT isn’t subject to the vagaries of the weather and is able to respond to calls from land owners interested in what they can do to protect their land, and from farmers who are eager to increase their operations. Concerns about industrially-produced food are having a positive effect on the market for local meat and produce, and increasingly, land protected by FLT is supporting sustainable agricultural activity and providing jobs. The one-time financial benefit to the seller or developer who then goes on to the next project pales when compared to the long-term benefits that a protected parcel will provide to future generations.

The local farmers’ markets and farm stands are thriving as well, as people want to know what they’re eating and where it came from. This morning I stopped by Hager’s farm stand and was surprised to see a friend from Charlemont delivering her raspberries. In a world that’s becoming increasingly disconnected, it’s great seeing friends and supporting your neighbors. People tell me they get a real boost from doing their business locally and I agree.

As FLT continues to partner with local agriculture and preserve open space, the work of Rich Hubbard and staff benefits all of us. Unfortunately, because FLT is without an endowment, we begin each year with the monumental job of raising over \$500,000 to cover costs associated with land protection. The energies and talents that are diverted from conservation work in order to fundraise impacts our ability to take a proactive approach to strategic land protection; sometimes this subjects us to unpleasant surprises as we learn of the sale or development of parcels that have important resources, or that might have complimented other projects we previously worked on.

We ask our friends and membership to consider both the short term (annual operating expenses) as well as the long term (endowment) of FLT in relation to the quality of life that it enhances. The record speaks for itself: over 20 years, over 19,000 acres and counting.

MEMBER BENEFITS

- Franklin Land Trust newsletter
- Member News & Information monthly email
- Advance notice/invitation to special events
- Invitation to Annual Members’ Picnic
- Free workshops and protected property hikes
- The knowledge that your membership helps to protect the farms, forests, and other natural resources significant to the environmental quality, economy, and rural character of our region

When you give, you receive something in return! Please visit www.franklinlandtrust.org for details.

ARE YOU READY TO JOIN?

Please go to the membership form on the back cover and make the commitment to permanently protect the working landscapes and rural, scenic character of western Massachusetts for years to come.

Future generations will thank you!

WANT TO GO PAPERLESS?

Has Your Email or Mailing Address Changed? Contact Mary Lynn Sabourin to sign up for our monthly e-news or make changes to your contact information: **625-9151** or msabourin@franklinlandtrust.org.

PROJECT UPDATES

June 30 marked the end of FLT’s 2010 fiscal year, and it was a busy one. In all, Franklin Land Trust helped local farmers and other land-owners protect over 1,000 acres of land, for a total of over 19,000 acres of land protected to date.

Conservation Restrictions Donated to Franklin Land Trust:

COTY CR, LEYDEN, 32 ACRES

Ellen M. Coty donated a CR on approximately 32 acres of farm and woodland on Frizzell Hill Road in Leyden. The Coty property will protect about 2,100 feet of frontage along Frizzell Hill Road. This property is in a region where considerable land has been protected for conservation purposes, including multiple Agricultural Preservation Restrictions held by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources as well as the Leyden Wildlife Management Area owned by the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game.

MCBRIDE CR, WENDELL, 16 ACRES

Mary V. McBride gifted a CR on approximately 16 acres of woodland on West Road in Wendell. The McBride property will protect about 600 feet of frontage along the east side of West Road and approximately 1,300 feet of frontage along an unnamed creek that is a tributary to Plympton Brook, which feeds Lake Wyola. The northeast corner of the McBride property abuts the Wendell Wildlife Area managed by the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game. In addition, the McBride property is in a conservation focus area as designated by Wendell’s Open Space Plan.

COONEY CR, WHATELY, 4.7 ACRES

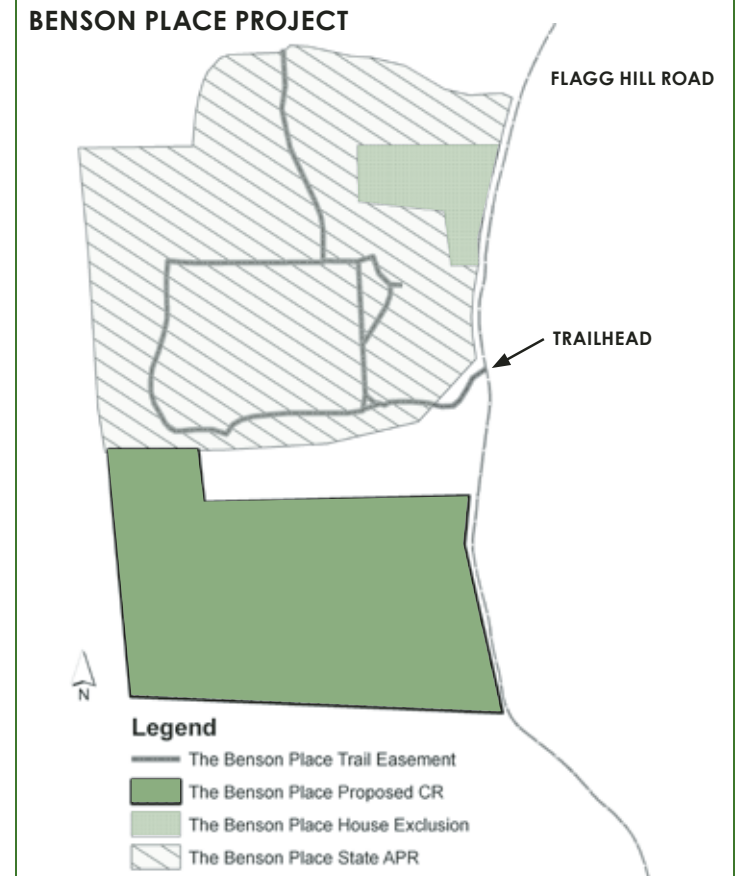
Gabriel & Elizabeth Cooney donated a CR on approximately 4.7 acres of woodland on Poplar Hill Road in Whately. The Cooney property will protect approximately 900 feet of frontage along the Conway Road. The property is in a region where considerable land has been protected for conservation purposes, including newly acquired land by the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game, which expands the Whately Wildlife Management Unit. In addition, the property is in close proximity to the Northampton Reservoir, a significant drinking water source for the town of Northampton.

Facilitated State APRs and Other Projects:

RANDALL APR, SHELBURNE/COLRAIN, 21 ACRES

FLT assisted George Randall of Shelburne with the state APR process to protect 21 acres of farmland in Shelburne and Colrain. FLT contributed \$300 toward the local match, and the town of Shelburne made a contribution of \$700.

The farm has been used for silage and hay crops in recent years, and contains some of the better soils found in the hilly areas of these two towns. The land is leased by local dairy farmer James Graves, who is also an abutter of the Randall property.



SUNDERLAND, STATE APR, 117 ACRES

FLT facilitated a state held APR on a parcel of farmland in Sunderland, totaling approximately 117 acres. The farm is an active dairy operated by the owner. The property is highly visible and represents a significant portion of the farm’s holdings.

BEAUCHESNE PROJECT, MONTAGUE, 8 ACRES

FLT completed the transfer of a property owned by the estate of Rodney Beauchesne to the Department of Fish & Game. FLT pre-acquired the 7.8 acre property in Montague and worked with contractor Mike Skalski of Ashfield to clean up the property, along with a dedicated team of local volunteers who spent countless hours picking up debris to make the site safe for public use. The property includes frontage along the Saw Mill River and sits directly across from a town well site.

Special thanks go to the municipal offices of Montague, particularly the fire and police departments, and the supporting towns who assisted with the controlled burn of the house and barn on the property.

MAIEWSKI APR, WHATELY, 45 ACRES

FLT facilitated a state held APR on approximately 45 acres of farmland along Long Plain Road in Whately. The farm has been used primarily for intensive row crop production, especially potatoes.





FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Race to the Top

Over the years that I managed the Massachusetts Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) Program, I was constantly looking down. My focus was strictly on farmland—trying to protect the state’s most active farms with the best soils—and here in western Massachusetts our most fertile agricultural land is, in most cases, located on our valley floors along our streams and rivers. When I joined the Franklin Land Trust back in 2004, the transition was seamless: FLT has historically focused, in large part, on protecting this area’s threatened farmland.

The loss of our farmland to development should be a concern to all of us, not only because it is a resource that sustains us with fresh local agricultural products, but because many of our most significant scenic, rural landscapes are defined by farmland. However, let me suggest another threatened natural resource that is critical to the scenic and rural integrity of western Massachusetts: our hilltops and mountain tops.

As I drive along the main highways and back roads of this beautiful part of Massachusetts, more and more I find myself looking up. I have been struck by the extent to which our hills and mountains serve as a critical backdrop for many of our most scenic landscapes. I have also noted with alarm that these critical open space resources are clearly under siege.

While prime farmland is at high risk due to the ease of developing it, our hill and mountain tops are at high risk due to the urge that many people have to build on high ground with views.

Although this urge is understandable, it unfortunately results in a dynamic where people who build their house on a hill or mountain top have the pleasure of enjoying spectacular views, while the rest of us are forced to live with the reality that, in many cases, that house has destroyed a much loved scenic vista or blocked access to public recreation. In fact, I have come to the realization that there is no greater threat to the scenic, rural character of western Massachusetts than the development of our hill and mountain tops.

Since we can’t change human nature, it is unrealistic to expect all owners of our hill and mountain tops to voluntarily give up their rights to develop their land. Therefore, the only solution to this threat is a proactive effort to protect this critical resource. In 1974, the Massachusetts Legislature authorized cities and towns in Berkshire County to “adopt reasonable rules and regulations relative to the mountain regions situated within the territorial limits of such city or town to protect watershed resources and preserve the natural scenic qualities of the environment.”

Should we encourage the Legislature to authorize towns here in Franklin, Hampshire and Hampden County to adopt similar regulations? Maybe. However, another solution is to help FLT garner the financial resources necessary to proactively reach out to these landowners and to purchase Conservation Restrictions to protect these important highlands. **If you share my concern about our hill and mountain tops, let us know, and please express it through your continued, generous support for FLT.**

WHY I SUPPORT THE LAND TRUST by Sandy Whittlesey

When I started the Deerfield Dirt-Road Randonnee in 2005, the effort was based on the premise of a fundraiser for FLT. It’s a good thing I did not develop a business plan then, because the 58 cyclists who signed up that year were not going to have an impact on the land situation here!

But, then, two little miracles occurred. First, FLT fully embraced the event, lending its considerable skills and people network, and then the inaugural event got national press, with many riders saying it was the best ride they had ever done. This August, just five years on, 700 riders signed up from 30 states and provinces. Once again the ride received glowing compliments, and “D2R2” is now both a cycling cult classic and an important source of funds for FLT operations.

Land use has been a very personal journey for me, more so than just for cycling. My Czech mother grew up in the Depression on a 20-acre Iowa farm without running water, electricity, or insulation. Grandpa didn’t build the house until my mom was 14.



Photo: Ben Barnhart

While he drove the model T anywhere from Marshalltown to Chicago in search of carpentry jobs, Grandma raised two kids along with the crops and animals that provided them with their veggies, meat, eggs, milk, soap, goose down, and supplemental income. Truly, it was that parcel of land that let my maternal side

of the family take root here in the States.

Selling the farm in 1997 was sad, but we had little choice. At that time, nearby Des Moines was the third-hottest construction market in the USA, after Vegas and Phoenix, and even my cousins, with 200 acres to feed 300 head of hog, were only deriving recreational income from the enterprise. I distinctly remember marking 1997 as the year that family farming was dead.

Franklin Land Trust
Preservation Ale

NO FARMS • NO BEER

Get It While You Can!

Our special BBC brew is only available through November 15, so order yours now, before it’s gone. Preservation Ale is an English style pale ale, and a portion of the proceeds from the sale are being donated by Berkshire Brewing Company, and used to support land conservation in our community.

Ask for Franklin Land Trust’s Preservation Ale at your local beer purveyor and pub!

Hello-Goodbye: FLT Staff Changes

FLT bid farewell to Liz Kidder this summer. We thank Liz for her nine years of service to the organization. As Program Coordinator she worked on and coordinated special events, organized volunteers, and wrote and researched grants. Liz was a valuable part of a team which helped make FLT successful; her work and passion for furthering FLT’s mission will be greatly missed.

We are also saying goodbye to Land Protection Specialist Brandon Vickery. Brandon and his partner Caitlin are moving to Portland, Oregon. Brandon joined FLT in the summer of 2007 after completing his Master of Science degree in Forest and Resource Management at the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry. During the past three years at FLT, Brandon worked with numerous farmers and other land owners to protect their land through state APRs and donated conservation restrictions. Brandon was also instrumental in encouraging FLT to complete a strategic conservation plan. We will miss his quiet humor, focus, and dedication.

Our new Land Protection Specialist, Paul Gagnon, lives with his partner Laura on an organic farm in Guilford, Vermont, just north of the Massachusetts state line. Previously, he worked as an interpretive ranger for The Trustees of Reservations. He became interested in a career in land conservation after through-hiking the Appalachian Trail over a decade ago. Paul is a student of the Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning Department at UMass, Amherst where he is putting the final touches on a second Master’s degree. In his spare time, Paul collects maps, paddles his canoe, writes fiction, does volunteer trail work, and hikes throughout New England and eastern Canada.

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In retrospect, however, the late 1990’s may have been the point at which the tide turned. Now, even my back four acres in Deerfield are worthy to farm, and I marvel at all the delicious stuff growing up and down the Valley. **To me, this is what an economic recovery looks like: the notion that a young family can buy a few acres and make a viable business from it, and that their trade and skills are respected and valued in the community.**

In the big picture, I think the main lesson of D2R2 is to note how far people travel to cycle here, and how our countryside enralls them. We have very special turf here in Franklin County. So let me take this opportunity to congratulate the Land Trust for approaching 20,000 acres of protected land this year. This is 32 square miles of land, equal to the area of my hometown of Deerfield. What an amazing accomplishment! Contributing to this effort has been such a fulfilling pleasure, and I can only dream what another ten years will bring.



The Stewardship Corner

Somewhere Between a Drill Hole and a Gun Barrel

By Will Anderson

As most of our members know, for land trusts Stewardship is the management and oversight of the Conservation Restrictions and Agricultural Preservation Restrictions they hold and the direct management of the Conservation lands they own. Oversight of the almost 120 CR's and APR's FLT is responsible for includes two significant tasks. First is the development of baseline documentation, which inventories the property's resources and their condition at the time of the CR or APR gift. This document includes detailed narratives, boundary descriptions, mapping and photo documentation. The second task is the regular monitoring of CRs and APRs, in perpetuity, using the original baseline documentation as a way to make sure that the restrictions are upheld.



To help build our capacity to do this important work FLT became part of the Massachusetts Land Initiative for Tomorrow or MassLIFT. MassLIFT is a collaborative effort of seven regional conservation groups from across the Commonwealth, designed to meet critical community needs for land protection, including the initiation of new projects, stewardship of protected lands, outreach to the broader community, and service learning opportunities to engage young people in conservation.



The project is funded in part by a \$260,000 grant from the AmeriCorps program, which provides stipends for 20 AmeriCorps volunteers who will serve as Land Stewards, Outreach Coordinators, Regional Conservationists, or Service Learning Coordinators. The four positions are modeled on a pilot program carried out by Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust in 2008-2010 with funding from the Massachusetts Commonwealth Corps program.

In addition to FLT and Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust, the five regional conservation partners in the project are The Greater Worcester Land Trust, Kestrel Trust, Nashua River Watershed Association, Sudbury Valley Trustees, and Wildlands Trust.

FLT was awarded a Land Steward position from MassLIFT. I am happy to say that after a number of interviews we decided to hire Eli Dwight. Eli is a native of western Massachusetts and a graduate of Warren Wilson College in North Carolina. In addition to majoring in Conservation Biology and Forestry, Eli also worked on a project while in school with a Montana non-profit, Northwest Connections, studying private and public land use, management and land conservation. Eli also acquired necessary skill sets while working for a season in the western Cascades of Washington on a mountain goat research project.

Eli's work at FLT will help tremendously in achieving our stewardship goals. He will work on the backlog of baselines FLT acquired when it merged with the Deerfield Land Trust. Eli will also help coordinate a volunteer system to help us cover our monitoring responsibilities. Finally, he will help me with the active management of FLT's fee-owned properties. I am excited to work with Eli and looking forward to whittling down the list of FLT's stewardship tasks.

The Massachusetts Lands Initiative for Tomorrow (MassLIFT) will engage AmeriCorps Members in service with local and regional land trusts and conservation groups to meet critical community needs for land protection. For more information please visit: http://www.americorps.gov/about/role_impact/state_profiles_detail.asp?tbl_profiles_state=MA.

Grant Adds New Community Resources

A grant from the Fields Pond Foundation gave a boost to our community access project at the Guyette Farm in Plainfield.

So far, FLT staff and volunteers have installed two informational kiosks at the entrance to the farm, near the barn. Information in these kiosks includes property maps, farming and Plainfield town history, and FLT brochures on membership, planned giving, conservation options and upcoming community events.

Fields Pond funds also supported the creation and installation of nine interpretive signs, including information on streams, overgrown pasture habitat, perched wetlands, mature sugar maple



Photo: Alex Alwater

forest and forest pathogens. Permanent trail markers are also in place to guide visitors along the trail as it leads them from pasture, to early-successional field habitat, to the cool shade of the hemlock forest and Meadow Brook.

Evelyn Guyette recently marked her 100th birthday. If you haven't yet been to the farm, come—walk the trails, enjoy the views, take in the history and beauty of the legacy that Evelyn has gifted to us all.

From Petals to Pedals

The 22nd Annual Farm and Garden tour was as popular as ever. We thank all the host sites for their time and effort in making this such a successful event. We had good weather, the gardens were beautiful and the farms were wonderful and unique. David and Aina Barten's woodworking studio and Megan Hart's pottery studio were very popular and a nice addition to the tour. A special thank you goes to all the volunteers who make this event possible every year.

Good food, great company and a beautiful setting—what could be better? All of these were present in abundance at the annual Member's Picnic September 10. This year the picnic was held at Caryl Dyer's 130-acre farm in Bernardston. Caryl gifted a Conservation Restriction on the property to FLT in 2009. Thanks to everyone who came out to celebrate, hike the property and show their support for land conservation. Special thanks to Caryl for hosting the event and sharing her beautiful farm with us.

Franklin Land Trust's annual D2R2 Deerfield Dirt Road Randonnee drew a record-breaking 648 riders from 28 states in the US, Canada and even Ireland. The event, held August 21, includes scenic and challenging 180, 100 or 40K rides, with most opting for the longer rides. An FLT fundraiser, D2R2 began as a favorite local ride on the dirt roads of Franklin County, but has since gained a reputation in the biking world as one of the hardest, most beautiful, fun, unique, and overall best rides out there. Biker "Jonny Bold" writes on his blog:

"They do SO much for you at this event. The food along the way is unreal and the friendliness is off the charts. The organization is flawless, and when you're done they offer a shuttle to the school where we can shower and then back to an incredible dinner and beer... This is THE challenge for anyone looking for one, and it supports a great cause."

D2R2 requires a huge amount of volunteer effort. Here's what one of the riders had to say about our volunteers: "...all the volunteers were incredibly friendly and helpful. I can't imagine how anyone could do a better job of being cheerful while meeting all the needs of the riders." We are so grateful to those who gave their time in support of this signature FLT event.

D2R2 is a wonderful way to bring attention to FLT's conservation work and a great opportunity for folks to get out

and enjoy the beauty of our region. For more on this year's ride and links to biker blogs and video, go to: <http://www.franklinlandtrust.org/randonnee.html>



Top: Path to the Bonifaz Garden in Conway

Left: D2R2 Riders break for lunch at the covered bridge in Guilford, VT



Photo: Rich Hubbard

and enjoy the beauty of our region. For more on this year's ride and links to biker blogs and video, go to: <http://www.franklinlandtrust.org/randonnee.html>

Speaking of Volunteers

We are always ready to welcome new volunteers to FLT. Help is needed at special events like the Farm & Garden Tour and the D2R2 Bike Ride. Our land protection staff is also seeking volunteers for trail clearing and maintenance, species monitoring and control, boundary marking and general stewardship assistance.

Get satisfaction from knowing your time is a significant contribution to land conservation, have fun helping out with one of our special events or properties, attend events free and get a free FLT membership for volunteering!

If you're ready to help, please check off your volunteer preferences on the Membership form on the back of the newsletter and mail it to us. You can also contact Linda Alvord at 625-9151 or lalvord@franklinlandtrust.org



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Upcoming Events

FIELD DAY:
Stone Walls & Scenery
 Guyette Farm | Plainfield
 date TBA: Late Fall

FAMILY DAY:
Build a Bird House!
 Guyette Farm | Plainfield
 date TBA: March/April

WINTER WALK:
History of the Forest
 Betty Maitland Memorial Forest | Heath
 date TBA: Early Winter

Farm & Garden Tour
 June 25-26, 2011

D2R2 Dirt Road Randonee
 August 20, 2011

FSC
 LOGO
 (bottom aligned
 with box on left)

FRANKLIN LAND TRUST MEMBERSHIP FORM

Please clip and mail this form to: Franklin Land Trust, P.O. Box 450, Shelburne Falls, MA 01370

Name(s) (please print) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ Email Address _____

Donation Amount _____ \$5000 _____ \$1000 _____ \$500 _____ \$250 _____ \$200 _____ \$100 _____ \$50 _____ \$25 _____ Other _____

FLT will not share information about its members with any other organization.

- A check is enclosed in the amount of \$ _____
- Please charge my credit card a total of \$ _____
 MasterCard Visa Card Number _____ Exp. date _____
- I would prefer to donate monthly payments of \$ _____

- I wish to donate land.
- I wish to have a conversation about protecting my property.
- I would like information about planned giving.
- I wish to donate stock.
- Other _____

- I am interested in volunteering. Please contact me about:
- Office work & mailing parties
- Land/habitat/trail projects
- Farm & Garden Tour (late June)
- D2R2 – Deerfield Dirt Road Randonnée (late August)
- Other _____