The Year in Review

It was another active year at Franklin Land Trust.

Requests from landowners continue to roll in, and while we’ve been busy responding to those requests, we’re also working hard to strengthen our operations and focus our resources. In particular, FLT has been working to develop a Strategic Conservation Plan.

The preparation of a SCP is a critical step identified in the FLT Organizational Strategic Plan, and has become an important national standard for conservation organizations. As defined by the Land Trust Alliance, a Strategic Conservation Plan is "a process that produces tools to aid decision makers in identifying, prioritizing, pursuing, and protecting those specific tracts of land that will most effectively and efficiently achieve the land trust’s mission.”

FLT has completed the first phase of the plan and will be reaching out to members and other key constituents for input about local priorities. We hope to wrap up the process by the end of fiscal year 2012.

Another focus has been to meet our ever-growing stewardship needs. FLT is responsible for monitoring and stewarding 108 restrictions and 4 fee-owned properties in perpetuity, a total of 6,751 acres.

In order to meet these needs, FLT stepped up our fundraising, working hard on all fronts. Individual donors have always been our biggest source of support; we’re proud of the investment they make in FLT and we’re also striving to increase revenue from grant funders and special events.

FLT’s signature events, the Deerfield Dirt Road Randonee (D2R2) and the Farm & Garden Tour, were both enthusiastically received this year. The Farm & Garden Tour in Heath drew visitors from all over New England, showcasing several exceptional gardens, as well as the studios of admired local artists and craftspeople. D2R2 drew almost 800 riders from across the country and netted over $30,000 for FLT’s conservation work.

Both of these events require a multitude of volunteers to help them run smoothly, and FLT is the lucky recipient of many hours of donated time and expertise. We are grateful to all the volunteers who gave so generously of their time. We’re also excited by the positive feedback and interest in the community workshops, hikes and family events we held this year.

FLT continued to make progress at two of its fee-owned properties, Guyette Farm and the Betty Maitland Memorial Forest. At Guyette, FLT led a series of trainings with the Student Conservation Association, completed 30 acres of late season mowing, 4.5 acres of invasive species control, and created 5.5 acres of early successional habitat. Community members in Plainfield are also collaborating with FLT to establish part of the farm as a community garden, and we offered several workshops at the farm in support of that endeavor.

2011-12 will see more maintenance of our trail system, fields and wildlife management areas; a timber harvest and timber stand improvement. We are also looking forward to the completion of the Guyette Farm Master Plan.

At the Betty Maitland Memorial Forest, FLT finished mitigation of the worst damage from the 2009 ice storm. The forest is slowly recovering, and visitors can once again safely enjoy the forest. Work for the coming year will include improved parking, better access to the vernal pool and new interpretive signage and picnic tables.

As the Franklin Land Trust continues to run the race to conserve this region’s most critical natural and scenic resources before they are permanently lost to development, we are working to build broad public support for conservation, create a sense of shared purpose around land use and planning, and celebrate the positive outcomes that land protection yields: success you can measure by the acre.
From the Executive Director

As Franklin Land Trust approaches its 25th year, we are also closing in on 25,000 acres of conserved land in our region. As we celebrate this accomplishment it is also helpful to consider what is behind this number. In other words: what exactly does 25,000 acres look like, and what does it mean to our community?

When you look at the map in our Annual Report, it’s difficult to picture how all those orange rectangles of conserved land add up. But bring those pieces together, and they amount to a land mass almost the size of the Quabbin Reservoir, the largest inland body of water in the Commonwealth – a body of water that stretches from Belchertown to New Salem.

More important than the number of acres of land that FLT has protected is the quality and significance of that land. FLT has been involved in conserving some of western Massachusetts’ signature landscapes: the Mohawk Trail, the view from the top of Mt. Sugarloaf, the entrance to the French King Bridge, the Connecticut River and Deerfield River corridors, the Ashfield Town Common, and north and south meadows of Old Deerfield, to name just a few. FLT has facilitated 290 projects in 26 towns in Franklin and to a lesser extent, Hampshire and Hampden Counties. In fact, FLT has facilitated the largest number of Agricultural Preservation Restrictions in the state, including almost 10,000 acres of productive farmland that is so important to our community.

That this land has been conserved impacts us all on a daily basis. Together these projects represent key factors in our quality of life, ecosystem health and economic well-being. When so much in our lives is changing, and not always for the better, it’s good to know that we have the power to protect our present—and our future—simply by protecting the land.

Richard K. Hubbard, Executive Director

### TOWN-BY-TOWN SUMMARY 1987-2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th># of Projects</th>
<th>Acres Protected</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ashfield</td>
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26 Towns 290 20,244

### TOTAL PROTECTED ACRES 1987-2011

- 25,000
- 20,244
- 15,000
- 10,000
- 5,000

### FY11 PROTECTED ACRES BY CATEGORY

- Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (APRs) 50%
- Conservation Restrictions (CRs) 50%
The Projects

Franklin Land Trust helped local landowners conserve almost 1,000 acres of land in the past fiscal year.

The projects we completed range widely in scale and character: from open pasture and working farmland to rich wildlife habitat and scenic road frontage. Geographically, they range from Heath to Hadley, Leyden to Ashfield, and in terms of size, from 13 to 113 acres.

Each of the projects we facilitate is important in its own way, and each contributes to FLT’s mission: to protect the natural resources significant to the environmental quality, economy and rural character of western Massachusetts. Coming up on our 25th anniversary, we look forward to reaching 25,000 acres permanently conserved by the end of the next fiscal year. Here are some highlights from projects FLT completed this year:

Peter Corens, Ashfield
North Bear River Road & Murray Road • 81 acres
FLT accepted a gift Conservation Restriction (CR) on 81 acres of pasture, critical woodlands and historic sites in the North Bear River area. The North Bear River Road parcel contains active pasture area in the interior portion of the property, shrubby wetlands to the north and drains directly into the Bear River. This land abuts other land previously protected by FLT, including the last 2 CRs donated to FLT by Corens.

The Bear River land is within Priority Habitats of Rare Species as defined by the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (NHESP), part of the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife. The other parcel has frontage along Murray and Beldingville Roads and is within a very scenic area of Ashfield. The property lies within Biomap Supporting Natural Landscape as defined by NHESP.

Joan A Crowley, Deerfield
River Road • 53 acres
The Franklin Land Trust pre-acquired an Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) on approximately 53 acres of land on River Road in Deerfield. The parcels are located along the Connecticut River and contain rich farmland used for hay and corn in support of the Crowley’s dairy operation. This APR is located in an area of Deerfield where considerable farmland has already been protected. The APR was subsequently transferred to the MA Dept. of Agricultural Resources.*

Edward & Diane Gralinski, Hadley
Mount Warner Road & River Drive • 52 acres
The Franklin Land Trust pre-acquired an Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) on approximately 52 acres of land owned by the Gralinski family. The property contains prime farmland that is currently being used to grow vegetables. This APR was subsequently transferred to the MA Dept. of Agricultural Resources.*

Sarah A. Kemble & Jerry S.Lund, Leyden
Simon Keets Road • 13 acres
FLT accepted a gift CR on a small but significant 13-acre parcel of land on Simon Keets Road and Brattleboro Road. The Lund/Kemble CR will protect about 1,300 feet of road frontage along Brattleboro Road and approximately 600 feet of road frontage along Simon Keets Road. A small creek bisects the property flowing into Beaver Meadow Brook, which ultimately flows into the Connecticut River and is a high priority resource supporting cold water fisheries.

This property contains Living Waters Critical Supporting Watershed and is in close proximity to a block of conservation land on Alexander Road protected by FLT. Finally, this represents a significant component of the scenic, rural character of Brattleboro Road in Leyden.

Paul Maiewski, Whately
Straits Road & River Road • 91 acres
FLT also pre-acquired an APR on a large parcel of rich river bottom farmland located along the west side of the Connecticut River where the Maiewskis raise vegetables. This APR was subsequently transferred to the MA Dept. of Agricultural Resources.* FLT has assisted the Maiewski Farm with a total of 4 APRs.

Trustees of the Charles H. Taylor Irrevocable Trust & Stephen E. Taylor, Eleanor B. Taylor and the Boston Safe Deposit and Trust Co., Conway
Adams Road • 113 acres
FLT accepted a gift CR from the Taylor family on approximately 113 acres of farm and woodland on Adams Road in Conway. The Taylor property has been in the family since the 1940s and protecting the property is a high priority for the family as part of their estate planning.

The property consists of about 8 acres of open field with the remaining acreage being productive woodland that extends to the south onto Cricket Hill in Joe Herrick Gulf and connects to the 105-acre Borton CR, creating a larger conservation block of approximately 220 acres. In addition, about 1,700 feet of Johnny Bean Brook pass through the property. The property contains Bio Map Core Habitat, BioMap Supporting Natural Landscape, Estimated Habitats of Rare Wildlife, and Priority Habitat of Rare Species.

* The Franklin Land Trust partnered with The Conservation Fund (TCF) on this project. TCF loaned FLT the funds necessary to pre-acquire these APRs, which allowed FLT to move quickly to protect these critical agricultural resources in advance of state funding becoming available. Without a partnership such as this, some of these landowners would have been forced to sell their land for development.
FISCAL YEAR 2011

REGIONAL CONSERVATION MAP

- Farms, Fields & Forests Protected by FLT
  20,244 acres
- Total Franklin County Regional Open Space

FY11 REVENUE
- Restricted Project Income: 1%
- Stewardship: 6%
- Project Service Fees: 1%
- Other: 1%
- Grants: 10%
- Gifts & Membership: 68%
- Fundraising Events: 16%
- Fundraising & Outreach: 24%
- Conservation & Stewardship: 68%

FY11 EXPENSES
- Administration: 8%
- Fundraising & Outreach: 24%
- Conservation & Stewardship: 68%

DONORS BY CATEGORY
- Visionary: $5000+ 3%
- Benefactor: $2500 1%
- Conservator: $1000 4%
- Defender: $500 6%
- Saver: $10 6%
- Sustainer: $100 28%
- Protector: $25 23%
- Steward: $250 6%
- Caretaker: $50 23%
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413/625-9153 Fax

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Cover photo: Farm share pick-up at Natural Roots Farm in Conway. Photo courtesy of Natural Roots.
Design by Seth Gregory