



Franklin Land Trust

Conserving Farms, Fields & Forests Since 1987

SPRING 2022



The World We Live In

Food Security

Wildlife Habitat

Carbon Sequestration and Forest Conservation

Gifts of Conservation Interest



FRANKLIN LAND TRUST
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FranklinLandTrust.org

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LETTER FROM THE BEND IN THE RIVER

There is a line in an old hymn that refers to “finding eternity in time” and it strikes me that this is a phrase describes the essence of the non-profit soul. Our job is to apply temporal tools and tasks to a lasting, and, in our case, a perpetual mission. All this might seem to go against the grain of a world that calibrates gains and losses by the minute, but we measure things by all sorts of reckonings, some are fleeting and others are enduring. Conservation is a journey, but it is also a destination. Our work is a process as well as a goal. In Scott Miller’s words: some days you get just what you need; some days you had it all along.

In the times that we are living in, perspective feels as unlikely as a sighting of the eastern cougar along the edge of a field or a great auk paddling around in the Deerfield River. Yet, we have to admit, there *have* been whooping cranes congregating in Ashfield this year, and our friends over on the Sheepscot in Maine spotted a rare sea eagle from Asia in December. Perhaps in the frame of reference of a global pandemic or cities leveled by war these might seem like small things.

Yet we don’t always recognize “the butterfly effect” of the good things that still happen in the world. The formal theory can be pretty cumbersome, but the principle is simple. Small actions, such as the beat of a butterfly’s wing, can ultimately have enormous magnifying consequences. Since we never know which wing reverberation is going to eventually result in a miracle, and since we know that we need a lot of miracles, the case can be made for a major increase in butterfly activity. It can’t hurt, and it may well help. Sometimes, you’re not supposed to know.

There’s a lot of need for miracles out there, and in here, these days. I received word of one today that I’ll pass along to you here. It is the testimony of one of our most faithful supporters, who sent along a remembrance of what he was moved to do after he protected his land with a conservation restriction:

“Several years ago, soon after our land had been protected, I walked across our field to the edge of a large beaver pond, climbed up on the viewing platform, raised my arms to the wild world around me and announced: “It’s all yours. We humans are stepping back and giving you space to continue your evolutionary adventure. Thank you!”

They say that gratitude is the highest form of prayer, so we’re moved to repeat his sentiment, one that ought someday to echo over all the beaver ponds, corn fields, and maple ridges in our region. *Thank you*, and our thanks to all of you whose faith and support makes our life’s work and this deep natural gratitude possible.

Tom Curren
Executive Director



Tom Curren



Our thanks go to the Antonellis family of Deerfield for working with FLT to protect their land, and to the scores of donors who helped us to make the project possible.

Focus On Food Security

Franklin Land Trust’s identity and mission are focused on the conservation of the working landscape of western Massachusetts. Over the course of these 35 years, we have been devoted to this work. The events of the recent past are proving that **local agriculture is strong agriculture**, and that access to healthy food will continue to be a priority for all of us.

WHAT WE HAVE DONE

To date, FLT has initiated, managed, or secured the permanent conservation of over 14,000 acres of farmland here in the most rural and most productive landscapes of the Commonwealth.

WHAT WE ARE DOING

This year, FLT is working with farmers on more than 350 acres of farm projects that we hope to complete by this December. In addition, we are working with landowners in Deerfield, Buckland, Charlemont, and Ashfield to explore the possibility of keeping their land available forever for agriculture.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

If you own farmland and want to learn more about conservation options, please contact us at: 413-625-9151

If you wish to learn about financially supporting this good work,
please contact Mary Lynn Sabourin at mlsabourin@franklinlandtrust.org



Photo of Aline Pierce at “Aline’s Rock” in Goshen, a glacial boulder located on the land recently donated to the Franklin Land Trust by Gary & Aline Pierce

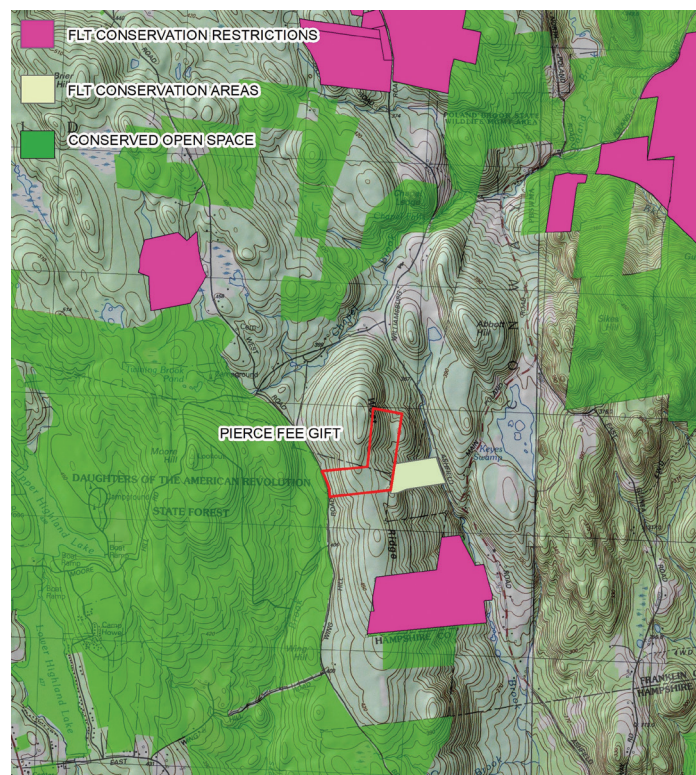


Focus On Wildlife Habitat

Our thanks to the Pierce family of Bondsville, MA whose gift of 60 acres connects the DAR State Forest in Goshen and the previously gifted Hott and Etheridge property in Conway, resulting now in over 1,700 acres of connected wildlife habitat. Long before Cole Porter wrote a song called “Don’t Fence Me In” our wildlife population thrived in the free access to the shelter, food, and nesting sites that make up the natural habitat of western Massachusetts. Lot fragmentation and the development of natural lands have serious consequences for all animals, from trout and turtles to partridge, songbirds, and large mammals such as deer and bear. All conservation is important, but it is large-scale collections of contiguous acres that makes the biggest difference for the critters that live among us.

WHAT WE HAVE DONE

FLT’s large-scale properties include, among others, the 625-acre Swift River Landscape project in Plainfield & Cummington that included the **Guyette Farm** and the Sargent/Nelson Property and, a large collection of CR’s in Conway (see article in page 8) and the recent 696-acre Warner Hill Landscape project that FLT completed in Charlemont and in Rowe last year (see p. 5).



WHAT WE ARE DOING

At present, FLT is investigating the potential for more large-scale conservation protection in communities throughout our region.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

If you are a landowner, or if you are a donor who wishes to consider making a major difference on a landscape scale, please contact us at 413-625-9151.

Focus On Carbon Sequestration & Forest Conservation

The quality and composition of the atmosphere throughout the Commonwealth depends substantially on the health and vigor of the forested regions of our western counties. Working forests, biological reserves, and formally sequestered tracts are all effective tools that serve to revive and restore air whose purity has, in many cases, been compromised through human activity.

WHAT WE HAVE DONE

Much as in the case of landscape-scale wildlife habitat protection, the conservation of large parcels of forested land is a primary and permanent way to reverse the consequences from the development of more than 13 acres a day that have been cited as the operative benchmark for the status quo of habitat loss in Massachusetts. To date, FLT has conserved close to 34,000 acres of land, much of which is in healthy and well-managed forests.

WHAT WE ARE DOING

FLT begins by being a good steward of the lands that it owns. On a larger scale, our greatest impact is through our subsidiary organization, the Massachusetts Woodlands Institute. MWI is a resource for conservation management of forested land throughout the entire state and contiguous areas. We work with landowners and their agents to support the development of optimum strategies in land ownership and management, based upon the circumstances prevailing in individual parcels of land.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

General support of FLT enables us to continue our work of stewardship, monitoring, and education on conservation properties. If you are a landowner of forested property who is interested in learning more about your management options, please contact MWI at emily@masswoodlands.org.



FLT Works To Conserve Scenic Edge Hill Golf Course

Working with landowner Mark Graves and with neighborhood conservationists, Franklin Land Trust has entered into an option agreement that provides for the purchase of either a conservation restriction or fee ownership of the Edge Hill Golf Course in Ashfield. The 147-acre property was managed as a dairy farm for many years by the Graves family, which in 1993 began operation of what eventually became an 18-hole golf course. The property consists of fields that run southward down from a bordering woodland of mixed hardwoods to the beginning flowage of the Bear River. The property is home to a host of wildlife species, including migratory birds, deer, and turtles who annually lay their eggs in the sandy areas of the golf course.

This is an iconic property in a scenic and sensitive area; it is adjacent both to conserved lands and to significant blocks that could be protected in the future. If it is not

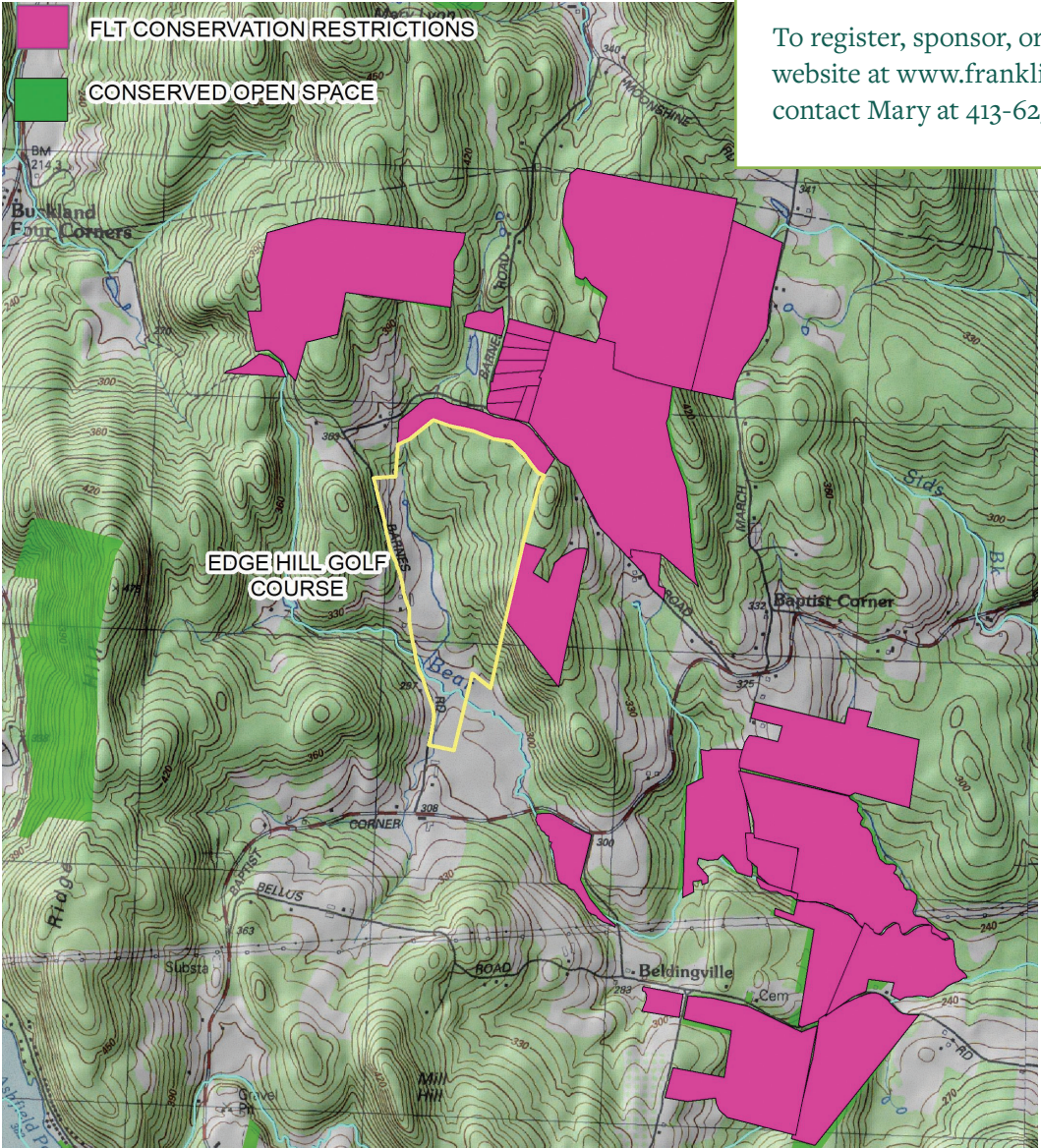
protected, it is very likely to be developed with the potential of 17 house lots. If it is developed the character of this area and its conservation potential will shift dramatically.

The surrounding wooded area along the Ashfield-Buckland border has long been recognized as a special place in an area that abounds in them. To date, the Bear Hill River region has seen 18 properties placed in permanent conservation protection, totaling a bit over 975 acres. The Edge Hill Golf Course is among several other nearby properties that, if protected, would add more than 361 acres to this figure, and bring the total protected land in the neighborhood to well over 1,300 acres in the neighborhood. Significant potential exists for additional conservation protection nearby in the Bear River Watershed.

If protected permanently through a Conservation Restriction (CR), Franklin Land Trust would work annually

with the landowner to monitor compliance with the terms of the restriction. If fee simple protection becomes the chosen method, FLT could rent or lease the property for recreational or agricultural use, with the option of granting a CR to another conservation organization. The barn structure could find multiple uses, including support space for the Trust's popular D2R2 bicycle ride.

The project has met with enthusiastic support thus far, with donations to date approaching the CR goal of \$550,000. Fee ownership would take \$660,000 for acquisition. FLT staff will be working with local and regional donors to complete this project as soon as possible, and to continue to advance the cause of conservation in this very special part of our state.



SAVE THE DATE



Edge Hill Golf Tournament June 11, 2022 | Ashfield, MA

Join us for a day of fun on the greens! FLT is seeking teams and sponsors for this inaugural event. Your support not only buys you a fun day of golf including greens fees, golf cart, bag lunch, and a chance to win cash and prizes, but also the knowledge that your registration fee supports the conservation of this iconic landscape in perpetuity!

To register, sponsor, or volunteer, please visit our website at www.franklinlandtrust.org/golf or contact Mary at 413-625-9151.

Lands Projects

We are excited about the lands projects that have just recently or very soon will be completed through the generosity and thoughtfulness of local landowners.

Gifts of Conservation Interest



Cal & Joan Clark, Ashfield
59.95 Acres | Conservation Restriction

The properties are south of the 367 +/- acres the Clarks conserved in 2007 and 2008 with FLT and abut both the Poland Brook WMA and TTOR’s Chapel Brook Reservation. The parcels abut other conserved land and are in a region of significantly large tracts of conservation lands that are both public and privately owned. The old Culver farm contains open agricultural fields, abandoned pasture, forests and wetlands. In addition, the farm contains both prime and statewide important farm soils and portions of an unnamed coldwater fisheries resource stream that flows into Poland Brook.

Cal Clark comments, “We are so glad we built our house where we did 34 years ago. We knew it was a nice, wooded area but did not know all the wild animals that would thrill us by passing our dining room window. As we learned of all the protected land around us, and more abutting property became available, we purchased it and finally learned of the advantages of a conservation restriction. Our latest purchase of the old Culver farm was mainly due to the open fields, beautiful brook, and the fast failing barn with barn swallows and a few bats. Someone once told us ‘there will always be land for housing but may not always be enough land for nature’ -so this seemed like the perfect property to save for nature and add to the land around it.”

We join the community in thanking Cal and Joan for their continued generosity, and for the impact that their actions will have for wildlife now and in the future!

William & Jane Obear, West Whately
48 Acres | Conservation Restriction

This is a parcel of farm and forest land located on Weber and Williamsburg Roads in West Whately. The property continues to be managed for agriculture, timber, and wildlife habitat, and includes a stream that is home to a thriving population of brook trout. Our thanks to Bill and Jane for their gift of a conservation restriction on this beautiful land.

Pierce Acres, Goshen & Ashfield
60 Acres | Fee Simple Gift of Conservation Land

A gift in fee of 60 acres of wooded land that connects FLT’s recently protected Hott/Ethridge lot with the expanse of the DAR Stare Forest in Goshen. The property is key wildlife habitat in its own right, but it also acts as a crucial connecting link close to 1700 acres of wildlife habitat that includes 15 miles of trails. Gary and Aline Pierce have made a major gift with the land, one that may ultimately help FLT connect to more previously protected properties to the eastward.

Our special thanks go as well to those individuals who have contacted FLT in regard to making fee gifts of conservation lands, or gifts of non-conservation real estate assets than can be used in support of our work.

Collaboration With Towns

Town of Granville

The majority of FLT’s work is with private landowners however recently we collaborated with the Town of Granville on the following conservation restriction project:

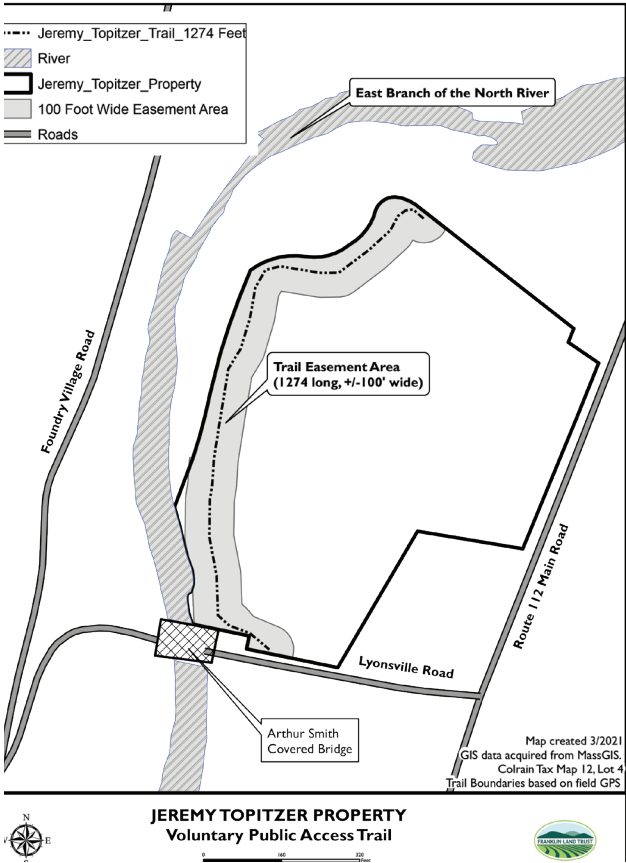
A few years ago, the Town of Granville had purchased a 12.5-acre forested lot with wetland and watershed attributes for conservation purposes. This spring they will be accepting a gift of an additional 10 acres from abutter John Briggs. The town has requested that FLT accept a conservation restriction on a total of 22.58 acres to be used for public access to forested land for trail walking and wildlife observation.

Voluntary Public Trail Easements

The Jeremy Topitzer Permanent Trail Easement, Colrain

FLT has recently completed a state VPA project that has supported 16 temporary and permanent trail easements for the use and benefit of the public. Among these is The Jeremy Topitzer Permanent Trail Easement, part of the Arthur Smith Covered Bridge Community project in Colrain. Jeremy is a farmer who owns the agricultural fields northeast of the covered bridge. The trail distance of 1274 feet in length, runs from the road north along the field edge to a bench and turn around. Jeremy has plans for a community garden and on his property and this trail is the first step in inviting the community onto his land. The trail is level in grade and will be an excellent short walk for all ages.

Please visit our website for more Places to Visit:
franklinlandtrust.org/places-to-visit



Welcome to Marlene Hebert, FLT Bookkeeper



Marlene Hebert has a home in Bernardston, MA, and has lived most of her life in the Franklin County area.

She has recently had the opportunity to join the FLT organization in October of 2021. She has found this experience to be very positive. Her previous work as an Accounting

Assistant/Administrative Assistant at a transportation company for over ten years has given her the skills to join the FLT team.

Marlene is the most content hiking through the woods and appreciating nature. Her favorite hiking partner is her adopted six-year-old Miniature Australian Shepherd Trini, who has been with her since July of 2019 at the age of three.

Although she is a mother of an only child, she gained a daughter when her son married. Geoffrey and Jenn have recently moved to TN along with their two dogs, who are apparently her grand dogs.

Marlene’s independent streak is apparent by her can-do attitude. There is evidence of this at her home and property. If she doesn’t know how to do something she will attempt to learn.



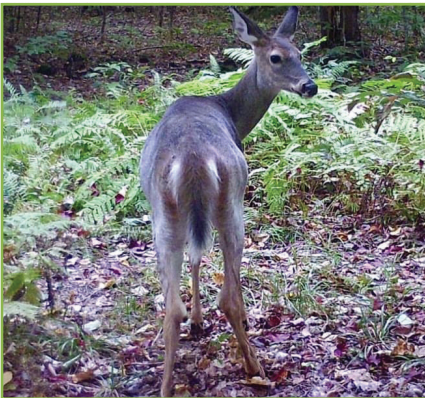
Painting by Philip Zuchman (1942-2021), donated to FLT by his wife, Deborah Gross-Zuchman

Philip Zuchman was a painter, an explorer, a writer and poet, as well as a student of philosophy, psychology and literature. Zuchman’s paintings have been exhibited worldwide with the U.S. State Department’s Art in Embassies Program of which he was a “Cultural Ambassador.” His work may be found in many private, corporate and institutional collections, including this generous donation to the Franklin Land Trust.

Philip and Deborah were frequent visitors to Shelburne and had a deep connection to and abiding love for the landscape here. In Philip’s words:

“Meaning for me is heightened in places where man has not yet subdued nature and where we remain a part of it. I attempt to formalize the spirit-nebula in the materiality of paint, bridging between nature and spirit, so that the memories of places become expressions of feeling and meaning.”

To see more of the works of Philip Zuchman please visit www.philipzuchman.com



Earth Day Tracking Workshop

Friday, April 22 | 10:30am-noon | Guyette Farm, Plainfield

To celebrate Earth Day and in honor of Give Back to the Land Day - local naturalist Cesi Marsegia and FLT’s Head Land Steward, Will Sloan Anderson will present a tracking and habitat workshop at Guyette Farm in Plainfield on Friday, April 22 from 10:30am-noon. Participation is limited to 15.

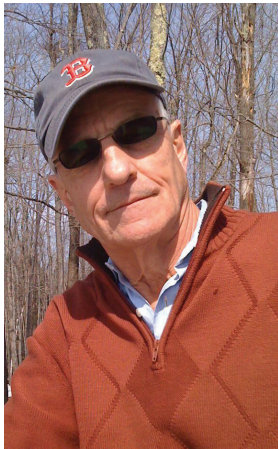
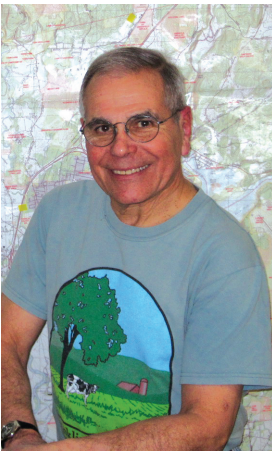
Sign up or learn more at franklinlandtrust.org/news/tracking

Transitions & Gratitude

The Annual Meeting of the Franklin Land Trust saw the election of a new slate of officers, including **Barbara Miller** of Ashfield as Chair, **Tom Luck** of Leyden as Vice Chair, **Jaap Molenaar** of Deerfield as Treasurer, and **Lloyd Crawford** of Hawley as Clerk. All have served FLT in a wide variety of volunteer roles, including, in several instances the conservation protection of their own properties. We look forward to their continued service!

Two officers of the board are retiring after years of dedication and accomplishment in the service of our mission:

Paul Cooper of Hawley has served as a board member since December 2007, our Treasurer from 2008-2012, and as President from 2012-2021, leading the organization through major conservation accomplishments including the Warner Hill Landscape Initiative (2021, 696 acres), the North Pond Conservation Initiative (2017-2019, 147 acres), and the renewed efforts to conserve the Deerfield Meadows. Paul and Leslie Cooper have been stalwart supporters of FLT for decades; a recent check of our oldest records indicates that they were among the very first donors to the Annual Fund back in 1987. Paul has been a tireless advocate, a clear and concise thinker, and a leader who defined our work both in the short term and in the long run. Early in my tenure as Executive Director, he and Leslie hosted a party where I was not only introduced to the neighbors but also to the heritage of Pudding Hollow in Hawley. A solid ten days before any elected officials or members of the press had grasped the magnitude of the Covid challenge, he appeared in my office at 8am, asked that I close the door, and quietly announced “We have a major issue on our hands. You have about a week to prepare to operate this agency on a remote basis.” Later, in the midst of a particularly daunting set of circumstances, I can remember Paul suddenly cutting to the larger chase by simply asking the question: “What are we learning here?” What we learned, through his leadership, is how much of a difference a dedicated and savvy person can make on his landscape and in his community. Many thanks, Paul, and we look forward to more pudding recipes and more bags of Black Oxford apples!



Olie Thorp joined FLT’s board in 2013 and served as Treasurer from 2014 -2021, providing practical leadership to our mission that sprang forth from his decades of residence in and devotion to Ashfield. His clear thinking coupled with his financial management experience gave the organization solid advice and direction in the management of its reserve and endowed funds. In a conservation world of Henry Thoreaus and Rachel Carsons, Olie has been our E. F. Hutton. Very often, when I sent out an e-mail, completed a meeting, or mailed out a newsletter, I received an immediate e-mail from him in my mailbox, thanking me and telling me in succinct detail what his response was to my thoughts. I never had to wonder what Olie was thinking, and I always appreciated the content of his thoughts, the tenor of his fellowship, and his never-wavering faith in the mission of conservation. Our thanks and hopes that you will continue to answer the phone when we call!



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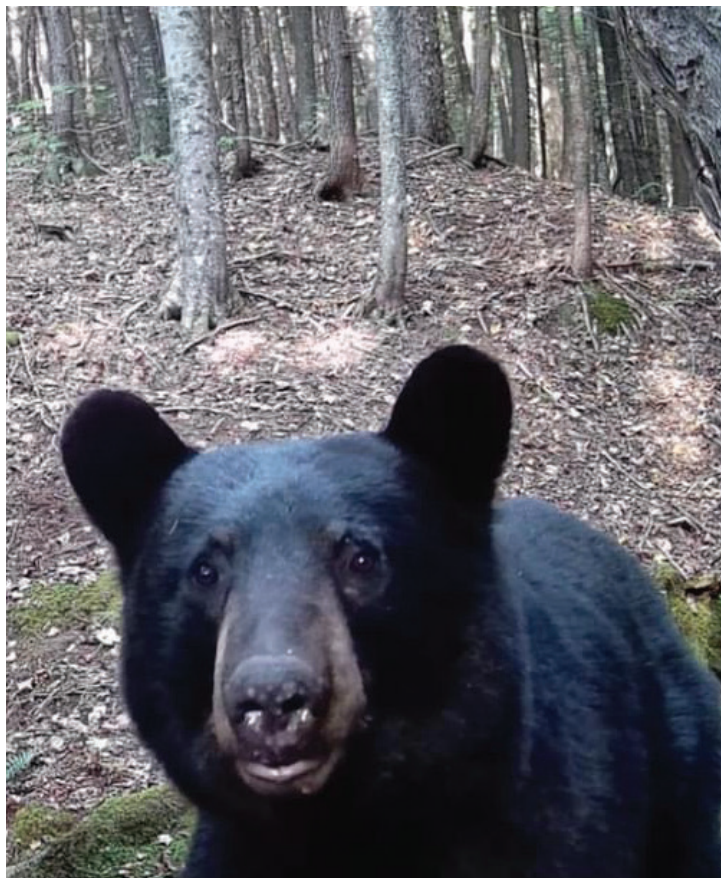
**Your support matters.
Thank YOU for making
a difference!**

Read More Online

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Give Back TO THE LAND

**Give back to the land on
Earth Day, April 22!**

Join us for our third annual "Give Back to the Land Day" on Friday, April 22. The event, which coincides with Earth Day, will be a 24-hour online giving day to raise funds for the Franklin Land Trust as well as for six other local land trusts that all work to conserve trails, forests, farms, and waterways in Massachusetts.

Please visit www.franklinlandtrust.org/giveback to learn more. Generous donors are matching online donations made before midnight on April 22.