

Welcome



MESSAGE from the Chair

am honored to write to you one final time as Chair of The Trustees. Serving in this role has been one of my greatest joys and I am deeply grateful for the privilege.

A year ago, the organization was grappling with a projected multimillion-dollar budget deficit. We had to make some challenging decisions,

but with the unfaltering leadership of Katie in her first year as President and CEO we rallied to have a remarkable year.

Since July of 2023, The Trustees has protected 590 acres and added more than 2,400 acres of conservation land to the active projects pipeline. This includes the acquisition of Cooper Hill in the Berkshires, and the permanent protection of Millborn Farm in Sherborn and Millis thanks to an ambitious—and successful fundraising campaign.

By protecting these critical landscapes, The Trustees continues to lead by example and have an impact in our home state and far beyond. The British consulate, National Trust of Scotland, American Public Gardens Association, and Governor Healey visited our special places this year to exchange information and ideas.

We must continue to work with our partners as climate change remains an existential threat that demands collective action. Deep appreciations for nature must be fostered so even more people become inspired to help us mitigate and adapt to the challenges.

The Trustees has a transformative power I have witnessed firsthand in my time as Chair thanks to the passion, knowledge, and commitment of Trustees employees, volunteers, and Members. I wish you all the best knowing you are in the good hands of my successor, Tom French. Thank you for an incredible and momentous seven years.

Peter B. Coffin Chair, Board of Directors



MESSAGE from the President

am pleased to present The Trustees' 2024 Annual Report. This past year we've leaned into the work of ensuring the organization is sustainable long into the future so we can deliver on our mission: to protect special places for everyone forever, all over the Commonwealth. As I've traveled to our 123 properties,

I've worked alongside our dedicated staff and witnessed firsthand the joy and connection that visitors experience. Whether it's planting corn at Powisset Farm, hiking through the beautiful Hilltowns, or raising a glass to raise funds for summer camp at The FARM Institute on Martha's Vineyard, our work to steward and connect these remarkable places to visitors while inspiring a lifelong appreciation for nature has never been more important.

As an organization, we faced tough decisions that led to a broad reorganization, but we remained steadfast in our commitment to our mission. Throughout this period of change, our focus on protecting our special places has not wavered. In fact, our efforts have been bolstered by the acquisition of new reservations, like the 196-acre Millborn Farm, expansion of acreage at several properties including Bartholomew's Cobble, and successful advocacy for conservation legislation that helps safeguard these lands for future generations.

But we know we can't do this work without bringing people into our mission. We believe that when people grow to love a special place in nature—something grand like World's End or Crane Beach, or smaller spaces like a community garden or town forest—it is the relationship with these landscapes and the love and knowledge that grows and deepens that makes people stand up and raise their voice to ask others to protect our one and only home. Looking ahead, The Trustees is well-positioned to bring more people into our work than ever before while accelerating the pace of conservation and improving environmental outcomes.

I hope that you find the information in this Annual Report both informative and encouraging. Your ongoing support and unwavering commitment to protecting and caring for open space in Massachusetts inspires me each and every day. Together, let us continue to embrace our mission with renewed passion, welcoming all to experience the beauty and importance of these lands, and raising our collective voice to address the challenges ahead.

Thank you for your continued partnership.

K. Theolianides **Katie Theoharides** President & CEO

2024 in Pictures

















- 1. City Night: In October, the 1st annual Roots & Resilience event supported the Trustees mission in Boston. Headlining the event were (left to right) Boston Public Radio's Jim Braude and Margery Eagan, Trustees President & CEO Katie Theoharides, Crystal Johnson (Asst. Sec'y of Environmental Justice, MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs), and Trustees Advisory Board Chair Jeff Bellows (VP of Corporate Citizenship & Public Affairs at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts).
- 2. Cultural Exchange: Delegations from the British consulate and the National Trust of Scotland visited several reservations in October to exchange ideas and share experiences. Here, the group learned about the 2024 Art & the Landscape installation, Jean Shin's Perch at Appleton Farms.
- 3. Universal Issues: At Weir River Farm this fall, Trustees South Shore staff hosted visitors from Tanzania, through the Africa Exchange Project, for discussions and learning centered around providing inclusive programming for children with special needs.
- 4. **Volunteer of the Year:** For a remarkable 35 years, Elnora Thompson has served the entire Dorchester community through her work as garden coordinator at Nightingale Community Garden.
- 5. Employee of the Year: Sr. Regional Stewardship Manager for the Metrowest Mike Francis is a respected leader who epitomizes the Trustees core values, putting mission first every day.
- 6. New Discovery: At Copicut Woods this July, the new, accessible Copicut Discovery Trail was unveiled. A first of its kind for the organization, the interactive trail encourages engagement with nature for children and adults alike.
- 7. Making a National Impression: The Trustees' sponsorship of the American Public Garden Association's annual conference in Boston in June treated 350 public gardens horticulturists from around the U.S. to tours and dinner at Castle Hill.
- 8. Children First: The final phase of improvement work at Armstrong-Kelley Park was completed this summer, with the opening of an expansive new children's play space.

@exploringthesouthcoast; (7) Photo by Tom Bollinger Photography; (8) Photo by Jane Messinger; Design by Lu – La Studio

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MESSAGE

from the Finance and Audit Committee

losing the book on Fiscal Year 2024, we are pleased to share positive financial news. This time last year we were reporting a multi-million-dollar operating deficit with our expenses projected to continue outpacing our revenue. While this year did finish in a deficit, it was much smaller than anticipated thanks to overall revenue growth and key expenditure reductions.

Alongside the support of Trustees donors, an extraordinary one-time gift funded a restructuring effort that reduced compensation expenses by more than \$2 million annually. This helped close the operating deficit while allowing the organization to more efficiently respond to property and Member needs, keep salaries and wages for our remaining workforce competitive, and invest in a new People & Culture function. A careful streamlining of program offerings and events—and the consolidation of agricultural operations—further reduced expenditures.

Through it all, more than \$7 million was invested in property stewardship projects such as Crane Estate restorations in Ipswich, Armstrong-Kelley Park landscape improvements in Osterville, Boston Community Gardens investments, and many others. Moreover, close to \$14 million was raised in an ambitious campaign to protect the 196-acre Millborn Farm in Sherborn and Millis and our balance sheet remained strong, and nearly debt free, with help from our generous donors.

Looking ahead, we should remain optimistic that the organization's finances are back on track. Katie and her leadership team have made the difficult but courageous steps to course correct as we now embark on the adventures of a new strategic plan.

Andrew P. Borggaard
Chair, Finance and Audit Committee

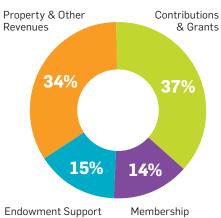
Financial Report

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION

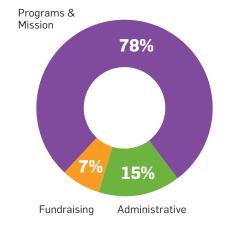
(in thousands of dollars)

| ASSETS | FY 2024 | FY 2023 |
|--|---------|---------|
| Cash and cash equivalents | 24,143 | 20,122 |
| Other assets | 3,757 | 4,665 |
| Pledges receivable | 1,941 | 2,118 |
| Investments | 224,975 | 198,675 |
| Funds held in trust by others | 46,515 | 41,486 |
| Assets related to split-interest agreements | 5,006 | 4,229 |
| Right-of-use assets-operating and finance leases | 2,184 | 2,808 |
| Fixed assets, net | 25,087 | 22,492 |
| Properties | 115,979 | 106,656 |
| TOTAL ASSETS | 449,587 | 403,251 |
| LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS | | |
| LIABILITIES | | |
| Accounts payable and accrued expenses | 3,006 | 3,464 |
| Deferred revenues | 6,559 | 7,785 |
| Operating and finance lease liabilities | 2,222 | 2,827 |
| Liability under split-interest agreements | 2,202 | 2,005 |
| Note payable | 1,545 | 1,595 |
| Other annuity obligation | - | 154 |
| TOTAL LIABILITIES | 15,534 | 17,830 |
| NET ASSETS | | |
| UNRESTRICTED | 62,991 | 56,761 |
| RESTRICTED | 371,062 | 328,660 |
| TOTAL NET ASSETS | 434,053 | 385,421 |
| TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS | 449,587 | 403,251 |

FY 2024 **OPERATING REVENUE**



FY 2024 OPERATING EXPENSES



Fiscal Year 2024

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS

(in thousands of dollars)

| OPERATING ACTIVITIES REVENUE AND SUPPORT | WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS | WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS | TOTAL |
|--|-------------------------------|----------------------------|---------|
| Endowment support appropriated to operations | 8,866 | 620 | 9,486 |
| Property and other revenues | 20,533 | 77 | 20,610 |
| Contributions | 13,435 | 26,785 | 40,220 |
| Membership | 8,859 | - | 8,859 |
| Net assets released from restrictions | 9,448 | (9,448) | - |
| TOTAL REVENUE AND SUPPORT | 61,141 | 18,034 | 79,175 |
| EXPENSES: PROGRAM SERVICES | | | |
| Property stewardship | 30,412 | - | 30,412 |
| Visitor amenities and engagement | 14,669 | - | 14,669 |
| SUBTOTAL PROGRAM SERVICES | 45,081 | 0 | 45,081 |
| EXPENSES: SUPPORTING SERVICES | | | |
| Fundraising | 3,950 | - | 3,950 |
| Marketing and member services | 3,326 | - | 3,326 |
| Administration | 5,789 | - | 5,789 |
| SUBTOTAL SUPPORTING SERVICES | 13,065 | 0 | 13,065 |
| TOTAL EXPENSES | 58,146 | 0 | 58,146 |
| CHANGE IN NET ASSETS | 2,995 | 18,034 | 21,029 |
| NON-OPERATING ACTIVITIES | | | |
| Restructuring expenses | (1,204) | - | (1,204) |
| Investment return, net of amounts appropriated for operations and fees | 3,909 | 24,208 | 28,117 |
| Contributions and change in value of split-interest agreements | 530 | 160 | 690 |
| TOTAL CHANGE IN NET ASSETS | 6,230 | 42,402 | 48,632 |
| NET ASSETS BEGINNING OF YEAR | 56,761 | 328,660 | 385,421 |
| NET ASSETS END OF YEAR | 62,991 | 371,062 | 434,053 |



Land Conservation

In the past year, The Trustees protected, or helped protect, seven properties totaling more than 457 acres.

Acquisitions (Including Present & Future Reservations)

PROJECT | CITY/TOWN (photo#)
NEWLY PROTECTED ACREAGE | PARTNERS/DONORS | DESCRIPTION

Millborn Farm | Millis & Sherborn (1)

196 Acres

The Trustees purchased 196 acres in Sherborn and Millis on the Charles River and Bogastow Brook, directly across from Bridge Island Meadows, an existing Trustees property. Millborn Farm combines open agricultural fields, woodlands, forested wetlands, and a stunning rolling landscape and will protect critical floodplain that contributes to the climate resilience of this region. The Trustees is working on creating a reservation at Millborn Farm and plans to open it to the public in 2026.

Boyett | Sheffield (2)

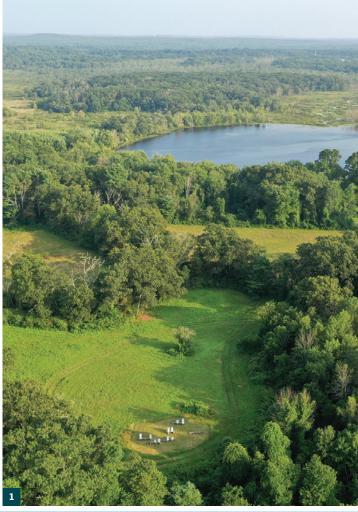
75 Acres | MA Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs, Sheffield Land Trust

The Trustees purchased this 75-acre parcel adjacent to the Bartholomew's Cobble reservation and along Cooper Hill Road in Sheffield with assistance of a state grant from the MA Landscape Partnership Program. This parcel is a part of a landscape scale conservation effort to protect more than 1,000 acres, working alongside eight conservation partners in Massachusetts and Connecticut.

Wasque Reservation Inholding | Edgartown

2.1 Acres

The Trustees purchased an important inholding at Wasque Reservation in Edgartown. This property sits on Katama Bay and provides important rare species habitat.





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Conservation Restrictions

PROJECT | CITY/TOWN (photo#)

NEWLY PROTECTED ACREAGE | PARTNERS/DONORS | DESCRIPTION

Tompson St. Reservation | Gloucester (3)

14.4 Acres | Essex County Greenbelt Association

In June 2022, Essex County Greenbelt Association (ECGA) purchased 14.4 acres of land from the West Gloucester Trinitarian Congregational Church. This land will be added to ECGA's Tompson Street Reservation. The Trustees holds a Conservation Restriction (CR) on Tompson Street Reservation's 338 acres and in 2023 this new land was added to the existing CR.

Sherborn Amendment | Sherborn (4)

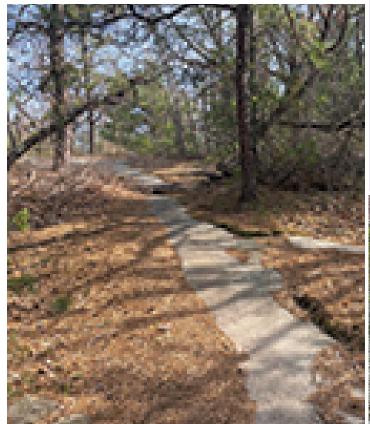
O Acres | The Lewis and Campbell Families

This 1989 CR was originally donated by Muriel Lewis, and was amended this year through the generosity of Judge Levin Campbell, honoring the wishes of his late wife Eleanor Lewis Campbell to extinguish two building envelopes. This amendment increases the protection of this predominantly forested 90+ acre CR along the Charles River in Sherborn.

Oblong Road | Williamstown (5)

10 Acres | Williamstown Rural Lands

The Trustees partnered with the Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation to protect a 10-acre parcel near Field Farm. Located on the scenic Oblong Road with open fields and extensive frontage, Williamstown Rural Lands owns and stewards this land for its scenic, agricultural, and public access values, and The Trustees holds a CR.







Assists

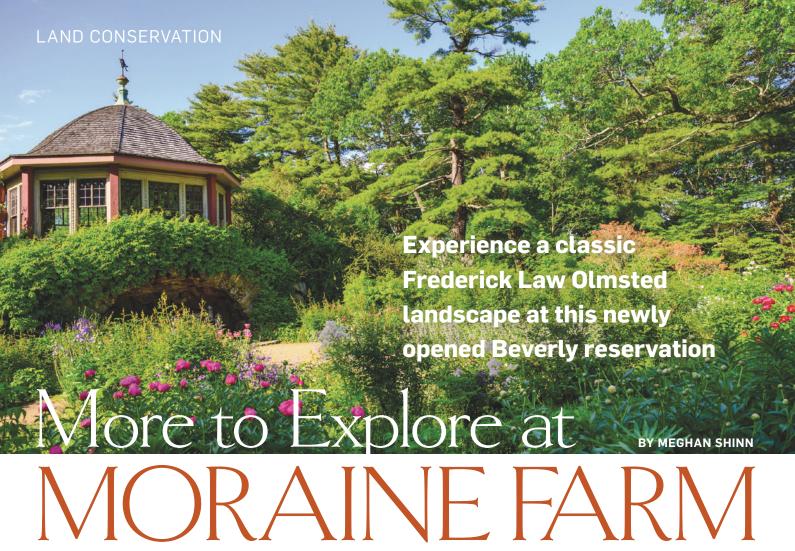
PROJECT | CITY/TOWN (photo#)
NEWLY PROTECTED ACREAGE | PARTNERS/DONORS | DESCRIPTION

The Boulders | Ashfield & Goshen (6)

160 Acres | Margaret Waggoner

The Trustees affiliate, Hilltown Land Trust, conserved 160 acres of forest and wetlands through a Conservation Restriction donated by the estate of Margaret Waggoner. The "Hilltown Boulders," named for the massive boulders scattered about the land, connects two large state conservation areas in Goshen and Ashfield and includes core wetland and forest habitat. Conservation of this land will open two miles of new public trails.









" any hands make light work," the saying goes. In the case of Moraine Farm, a vast and beautiful historic property in Beverly, such cooperation has proven key. Here, partner groups—including The Trustees—have collaborated for decades to protect and preserve a landscape tied to renowned landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted.

Recently, The Trustees took on greater responsibility at Moraine, following its purchase of a key 66 acres in 2022. After months of preparations and stewardship, visitors can now enjoy a deep experience of Olmsted's vision by walking the property's trails.

"What I love about this property is how it feels both natural and designed," said Pilar Garro, Director of the Long Hill & Stevens-Coolidge House & Gardens Portfolio, which includes Moraine Farm. She explained that one will be walking through woods, then an opening will reveal a quaint view of a structure or fields—a memorable moment that elevates a quiet walk and epitomizes Olmsted's work.

For a prime example of an Olmsted-crafted view, Cindy Brockway, Trustees Managing Director of Cultural Resources, pointed to the meadow hemmed by the South Carriage Loop. This meadow looks entirely natural, but Olmsted built the gently undulating topography and strategically placed groups of trees to make the bordering woods' edges curve in and out. These details provide a frame that subtly changes as one passes by, maintaining a picturesque scene.

Grand Beginnings

Moraine Farm was first created as a North Shore summer home for Boston businessman John Charles Phillips and his family. Phillips had purchased several neighboring farms in Beverly to assemble 275 acres of land bordering Wenham Lake and hired Frederick Law Olmsted in 1880 to design the grounds of the estate. At this time in his career, Olmsted had already completed designs for New York's Central Park and the Capitol grounds in Washington, D.C., and he had started work on pieces of Boston's Emerald Necklace, including the Arnold Arboretum.

Olmsted's designs allowed people to connect with each other and nature, and on a larger scale his public green spaces connected neighborhoods together. At Moraine Farm, which would be a precursor to his design at the grand Biltmore Estate in North Carolina, Olmsted created picturesque spaces, including a sweeping meadow, a sheep pasture with a rill leading to the lake, and an elevated lawn adjacent to the Phillips's house.

The house, designed by the Boston architectural firm Peabody & Stearns, was positioned atop a rise to hide any view of Wenham Lake from guests as they came up the driveway. The water would be revealed only upon reaching the home's large back terrace. Olmsted also designed several scenic carriage drives—wide, winding paths that looped through 75 acres of woodland and allowed the Phillips family to invite guests to ride the carriage roads and admire postcard-like views around each bend.

Olmsted's designs allowed people to connect with each other and nature, and on a larger scale his public green spaces connected neighborhoods together.

John Phillips died in 1885, fifteen years before the project was declared complete. His wife Anna and their five children continued to use Moraine Farm as their summer home, and two sons eventually bought and built on adjacent lands. A few years after Anna's death in 1925, the bulk of the Phillips land found new owners in the Batchelder family, who first purchased 141 acres and later added a parcel with agricultural buildings and 40 acres of farm fields.

Shared Visions

With the Batchelders, Moraine Farm found renewed life and, ultimately, a uniquely bright future. In the late 1970s, the property passed to George Batchelder III and his wife Mimi, who moved back east from the West Coast to live at Moraine Farm and carry on Olmsted's vision for the land. They consulted with scholars and environmental experts to preserve Moraine's beauty and enhance its health as a habitat for plants and wildlife. To continue this work in perpetuity, the family eventually decided to partner with several likeminded organizations, donating acreage to each group under an innovative conservation restriction that prevents development on the land and preserves its Olmstedian roots.

The Trustees' portion of the land includes the flat agricultural fields, which have been leased to New Entry Sustainable Farming Project—a Tufts University program that trains new farmers and improves communities' access to fresh, locally grown food—for the past decade. The Cape Ann Waldorf School and Project Adventure, a nonprofit that specializes in teambuilding through shared experiences, also received acreage from the Batchelder family.



Two other organizations, the Essex County Greenbelt Association and the Friends of the Olmsted Landscape, help preserve the land and landscape. The City of Beverly owns and maintains an abutting parcel known as the J.C. Phillips Nature Preserve, which contains remnants of one Phillips son's house.

Another Turning Point

In 2022, The Trustees bought Project Adventure's acreage at Moraine Farm. The purchase was made possible through fundraising and a \$1.1 million grant from the City of Beverly's Community Preservation Fund.

The transfer of these 66 acres benefited all concerned. Project Adventure continues to operate on the site but can focus on its educational mission. Beverly residents have the opportunity to grow their own food at the newly opened Moraine Farm Community Garden, developed in cooperation with The Trustees and now the only community garden in the city.

Meanwhile all visitors to Moraine can now enjoy the beautiful views Olmsted created, with the property now open for walking and picnicking. The newly finished parking lot abuts the Community Garden and the J.C. Phillips Nature Preserve, and visitors follow the Nature Preserve's Phillips Loop trail to reach The Trustees' portion of the property. A second entrance, off busy Conant Avenue, provides access for local residents arriving on foot. Olmsted would be pleased.

Adapted from an article in Special Places. Meghan Shinn is Editor of Horticulture, a subscription-based magazine for avid gardeners.

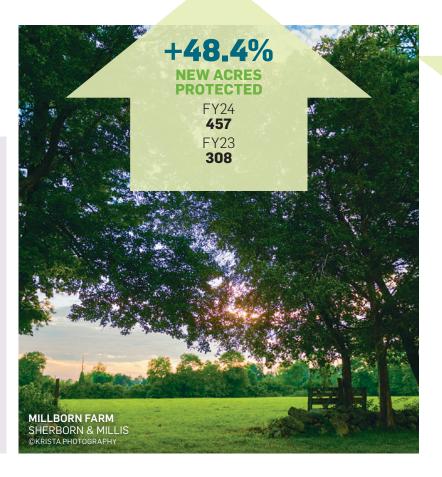


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BY THE NUMBERS

LAND CONSERVATION

Our mission drives us to redouble our commitment to conserve Massachusetts' vulnerable landscapes. We made great strides in this effort in Fiscal Year 2024 with the protection—through acquisition of land, securing of Conservation Restrictions, and partnering with the Hilltown Land Trust—of 457 new acres of land (see Land Conservation, pages 4-5, for the full report.) More than 2,400 acres have been added to the pipeline of active conservation projects in the past 18 months, as well. Land conservation holds significant promise for sequestering carbon, building resiliency, and preventing the worst impacts of climate change. As we enter a period when generational land turnover is picking up speed, our core mission work to conserve the Commonwealth's natural, working, and culturally significant landscapes is more important than ever.

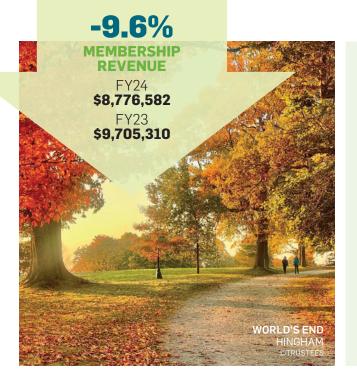


-4.6% **TOTAL CAMPERS*** 2024 3,263 2023 3,419 **AWARDED** 2024 177 Sessions 2023 122 Sessions

SUMMER CAMPS

Trustees Camps collectively provided 58 weeks of camp at seven of the Trustees' signature properties, from Ipswich to the Islands. Enthusiastic campers dug in at four farm camps, created hillside art installations at deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, and explored the distinctive ecosystems of the Massachusetts coast. We trained 55 new Camp Educators to design camp curricula, lead activities, games, and art projects, and otherwise provide outdoor educational fun all summer long. As part of the Trustees' commitment to creating more equitable and inclusive outdoor spaces, we awarded 170 camp scholarships—an increase of more than 45% over 2023, thanks to a significant increase in donations to the Trustees scholarship fund.

* In 2024, the camp at Chestnut Hill Farm was paused and the YMCA of Greater Boston took charge of camp at Rocky Woods, resulting in fewer Trustees-led camps and total campers compared



MEMBERSHIP

FY24 was a year of adjustment for Membership, with the removal of Crane Beach parking permits, a Membership rate increase, and post-pandemic normalization. While Membership revenue decreased 9.6% from FY23 and total Member Households dipped to 90,000, our Membership enrollment and retention rates continue to outpace our historic pre-pandemic performance. Our 2024 Member survey revealed the strong commitment our Members feel to the Trustees mission and the engagement they enjoy through visitation and program participation. Strong results from Giving Tuesday, and the Year End Appeal at the close of 2024 forecast continuing support from our Members in 2025 as we expand digital outreach through texting and the launch of our new CRM. Our customer service team strives to give our Members the best possible experience, answering over 55,000 emails and 14,000 calls in FY24. Connecting with our Members is an invaluable resource. We're striving for growth of the program and continued high levels of Membership retention in the years ahead.

STEWARDSHIP

The stewardship team at The Trustees is responsible for conducting assessments of properties across eight different mission-based programs: Buildings, Collections, Community Gardens, Designed Landscapes, Ecological Landscapes. Entrances, Living Collections, and Trails. In 2024, the team was able to bring a net of five properties from below to above our baseline standard goal of 70% of a property's assets achieving a rating of "Good" or better. Out of the Trustees' 122 open reservations, 110 (90%) are now above baseline, which marks a 108% increase since the baseline standards program began in 2018.

BELOW: The Trustees Stewardship team is always hard at work. Here, in February, trails team members are seen replacing the welcome kiosk at Petticoat Hill in Williamsburg.



105

SPOTLIGHT

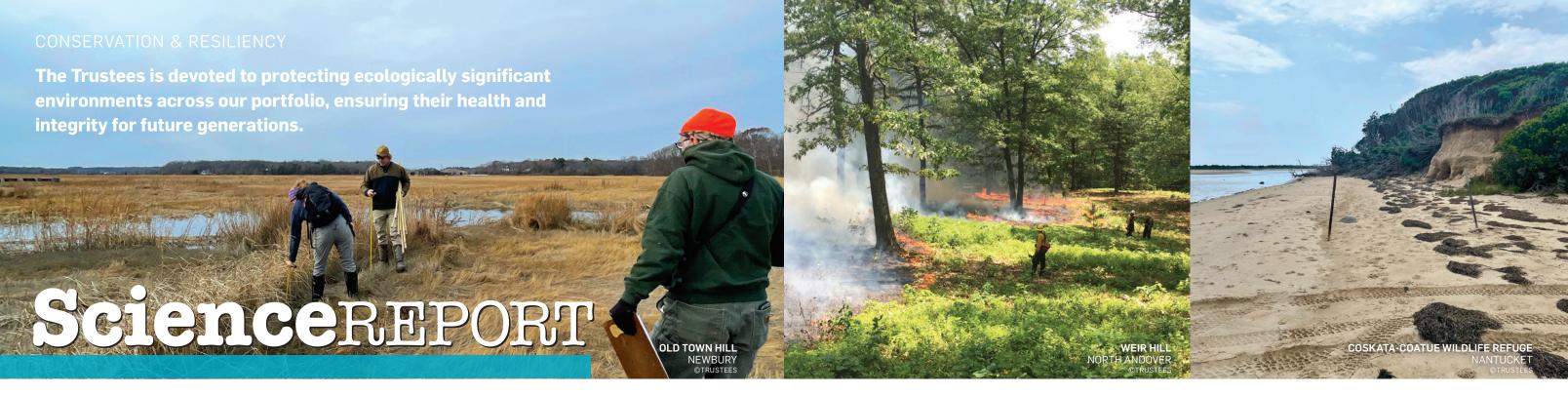
Most Popular Reservations in 2024

These are The Trustees' top 15 reservations for 2024, based on visits to their webpages:



- Castle Hill on the Crane Estate
- Crane Beach on the Crane Estate
- deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum
- Naumkead
- World's End
- 6. Fruitlands Museum
- 7. Dunes' Edge Campground
- 8. Appleton Farms
- 9. Tully Lake Campground
- 10. Stevens-Coolidge House & Gardens
- 11. Long Hill
- 12. Dinosaur Footprints
- 13. Weir River Farm
- 14. Eleanor Cabot Bradley Estate
- 15. The Old Manse

‡ Updated from the 2023 Annual Report to reflect scholarships awarded for total camp sessions (vs. unique campers)



Inland Ecology

Grasslands

The fourth year of work on the World's End Pollinator Habitat Improvement project in Hingham concluded this year. To support native pollinators, invasive plants were controlled and clean seedbeds created to introduce a variety of native wildflowers and grasses in 2025.

Staff catalogued and updated information on rare plant species, and surveyed vegetation composition of grassland habitats. Information gathered will help determine future projects that will improve rare plant habitats.

Barrens

42 acres of barrens were burned using prescribed fire at Ward Reservation in Andover & North Andover, Weir Hill in North Andover, and Appleton Farms Grass Rides in Hamilton & Ipswich. More than 200 acres were mowed across fire-treated properties.

At Weir Hill, ten acres of woody and invasive plants were spot-treated with herbicide, alongside the first year of planting rare species and priority pollinator plants, part of an ongoing resiliency project.

On Martha's Vineyard, partner BiodiversityWorks confirmed that a pilot wildlife crossing and two hibernaculas installed for snakes at Long Point Wildlife Refuge have been successful. 2024 also marked the launch of a Sandplain Corridor project at Long Point, working with partners to manage the property and adjacent protected land as a 1,000-acre corridor for plants and wildlife.

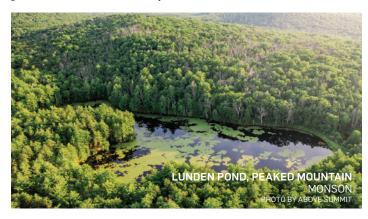
Forest

A forest resiliency project is ongoing at Notchview in Windsor. Seedlings were collected from red oak and hickory trees for transplant in a section where a slash wall—an exclosure that prevents deer browse of the understory—will be created.

Other Inland Ecology

Lunden Pond Dam, part of Peaked Mountain in Monson, had a dam removal feasibility study completed. Steps to find funding for deconstruction design and permitting will continue into 2025.

A climate vulnerability analysis for inland forest, wetland, and grassland habitat is underway and will also continue into 2025.



Climate Resilience on the Coast

The Great Marsh

Phase I of work on the Great Marsh reached its fifth year, with ditch remediation continuing at Old Town Hill in Newbury. The third year of treatment on Phase II locations in Ipswich, Essex, and Newbury has begun. Monitoring for both phases indicates efforts are consistently meeting targets. Phase III in Ipswich and Essex has scaled to approximately 1,000 acres and the team is moving through the permitting process. Major regulatory agencies are collaborating with The Trustees to allow a pilot of a new runnel technique during this phase.

Coskata-Coatue

Work began on the barrier beach resilience project on Coskata-Coatue Wildlife Refuge on Nantucket. This project will create a preliminary design for increased resilience at the Haulover and Coskata Pond—sites identified as most vulnerable with sea level rise and storm surge. Funding is provided by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). The Trustees hired GZA GeoEnvironmental to consult on this project. They have begun work on a hydraulic model of the area, following review of existing data and collection of new data.

Chappaquiddick Island

The Trustees, with local partners, is carrying out a salt marsh restoration project on Martha's Vineyard's Chappaquiddick Island. The project examines existing salt marsh within Cape Poge and Poucha Pond, carrying out an alternatives analysis for restoration.

The Trustees contracted with GZA GeoEnvironmental Group to carry out this work through site assessment, hydraulic modeling, and analysis of feasible restoration alternatives. The team is also working with Geoff Wilson from Northeast Wetland Restoration, who has been an invaluable contributor to other Trustees resiliency efforts. This project is also funded through the NFWF grant.

Neponset

The Neponset Estuary Salt Marsh Restoration Project is a partnership between the Neponset River Watershed Association and The Trustees. The Trustees is assisting in project management and providing expertise in salt marsh restoration. The team has wrapped the initial phase of the work, which encompassed a salt marsh health assessment, and is moving forward with the modeling efforts for the second phase.

Decarbonization

A consultant delivered a full report highlighting areas within the Trustees' holdings that offer the greatest decarbonization potential and has outlined pathways forward, such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions from buildings and transitioning away from the use of fossil fuels. Consultants visited 23 buildings as a representative sample of the Trustees' building stock (nearly 350 buildings in total), to create an informed plan to decarbonize HVAC systems.

A rough schedule has been completed for retrofitting HVAC systems in more than 75 buildings over the next five years, to meet the Massachusetts emissions goals of cutting 50% of emissions from heating and cooling by 2030. This, coupled with other decarbonization initiatives, is in service of the Trustees goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 50% organization-wide by 2030.

The Trustees is also creating a database of utility usage and other information to establish a baseline, which will be used to measure progress in our decarbonization efforts. A new position of Decarbonization Project Manager was created and hired this year to accomplish these goals.

Shorebirds

This year, The Trustees protected a total of 73 pairs of Piping Plover, 407 pairs of Least Tern, two pairs of Common Tern, and 28 pairs of American Oystercatcher. Management efforts at Trustees properties have helped the Massachusetts plover population increase nearly tenfold from about 135 pairs in 1986 to 1,196 pairs in 2024.

Martha's Vineyard

This was a stellar year for the Piping Plover population, producing 22 fledglings from 18 pairs. Predator exclosures around plover nests greatly improved hatching success in 2024. Least Terns did not do as well, fledging four to five chicks from 53 nests.

Crane Beach

45 pairs of Piping Plovers produced 54 fledged chicks. There were 289 nesting Least Tern pairs—the fifth highest number at Crane Beach since 1970. Oystercatchers fledged eleven chicks from 14 pairs.

Nantucket

Piping Plovers struggled this season on Nantucket—the ten nesting pairs only fledged three chicks. Terns also struggled: the 65 Least Tern pairs fledged eight to ten chicks, and the single Common Tern nest failed to produce chicks. Oystercatchers met statewide productivity targets with 14 pairs fledging seven chicks.



groecology continues to be a pivotal focus of the agriculture and ecology teams at The Trustees. Utilizing existing ecological practices to improve agricultural productivity, the use of agroecological principles across Trustees properties continues to bridge a perceived divide between agricultural practices and ecological restoration and preservation. Ongoing agroecology work in 2024 included:

Grazing

The Agroecology team completed the second of a three-year study at Appleton Farms, funded by the private Lookout Foundation, of the effects of early season grazing on bobolink nesting behavior. Grazing treatments were varied compared to the first year of the study. Prescribed grazing was carried out in collaboration with the Appleton livestock team. More than 20 nests were found and all successfully fledged chicks. The team established expanded 'refuges' in additional hayfields to continue to support nesting.

Willows

2024 marked the first year of a three-year conservation innovation grant for fodder willow working buffers at Appleton Farms, funded by the Natural Resources Conservation Service. The goal of this project is to buffer in-field ditches (which had been installed by the Appleton family over the years to help improve field drainage) with native shrub willows to protect water quality, improve habitat, and provide supplemental tree fodder for livestock. The team renovated three collapsed ditch sections and planted more than 2,400 willows along their banks. An irrigated shade house was built to propagate and store plants for future agroecology projects.

Hedgerows

A new row of shrubs, known as a hedgerow, was planted by the farm and agroecology teams in the flower and herb fields used for the Appleton Farms CSA. Hedgerows, much like old stone walls, serve as boundaries and borders between fields. In recent years, research has shown that these also serve as important habitat for pollinators such as bees, flies, and butterflies.

Three productive hedgerows were also established at Powisset Farm in Dover. These are each single-species hedgerows of native or hybrid fruiting crops: elderberries, beach plums, and hazelnuts. They will be certified organic for production in two more years.

Seed Collective

An ongoing partnership with The Ecotype Project (founded by the CT Northeast Organic Farming Association) and Eco59 seed collective was expanded this year. The Trustees is growing locally native (ecotypic) plants for seed production to support local habitat restoration efforts. The team now has six species in production across Appleton, Powisset, and Chestnut Hill farms. This year was the first year of full production for four species. Seeds were harvested and delivered to Eco59 in October.

Soil Health

The fields at Appleton and Powisset farms were monitored for soil health, three years after an initial assessment of all Trustees farm fields by the American Farmland Trust and Regenerative Design Group. The goal of repeat monitoring is to understand how management efforts impact the productivity potential of Trustees farmland. However, only Appleton and Powisset farms' fields had been actively managed by Trustees farmers over the entire three-year period and were therefore the only fields re-sampled. The soil sampling methods established through this project are now being implemented across other Trustees plantings, including the willow and hedgerow projects mentioned above.

ART AT THE TRUSTEES

n 2024, *Art at The Trustees* continued to elevate diverse voices and to invite visitors to explore the connections between art and nature with innovative and thought-provoking exhibitions. *Art & the Landscape* made its debut at Appleton Farms, Fruitlands Museum reopened its indoor gallery spaces, and deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum unveiled new outdoor artworks. This year's highlights included:

ART & THE LANDSCAPE

South Korea-born artist Jean Shin received the 2024 Art & the Landscape commission, working with Appleton Farms' storied history and current agroecology activities to create Perch, which was on view from April through October. Marking sites where the Trustees ecology team monitors bobolinks—songbirds who migrate from the southern hemisphere and whose populations are in decline—Shin sculpted platforms made from Appleton's fallen and dead trees. Visitors actively engaged in the monitoring, viewing perches within the birds' grassland and hayfield nesting areas that Shin had crafted from dilapidated wooden fencing and salvaged copper. Perch fully integrated itself into Appleton's landscape, raised awareness around bobolinks and their habitat, and amplified the Trustees' important ecological and agricultural endeavors at Appleton Farms.



Jean Shin, *Perch*, 2024. Local American chestnut from the wooden rails of a decommissioned fence at Appleton Farms; red oak, Norway maple, and sugar maple from dead and found trees at Appleton Farms; pruned branches from hybrid chestnuts at Chestnut Hill Farm and local American chestnuts with chestnut blight; salvaged copper from the community. Courtesy of the artist and Praise Shadows Art Gallery. Photo: ©Krista Photography.

FRUITLANDS MUSEUM

Three exhibitions—curated by Tess Lukey (Aquinnah Wampanoag). Associate Curator of Native American Art—launched this summer in the renamed indoor galleries at Fruitlands Museum. *Across Boundaries Across Barriers* opened in the Four Seasons Gallery (the former Art Gallery) featuring both historic and contemporary artworks from several Native communities. This reinterpretation



Across Boundaries Across Barriers exhibition on display at Fruitlands Museum in Harvard, MA until September 2029. Photo by Mel Taing.

of the substantial Indigenous collection assembled by Clara Endicott Sears will remain on view for five years. In the same gallery, *Place of Intersection: Survivance in the American West* compared reality and stereotypes of the 19th- and 2oth-century western U.S. Though the exhibit leaves in early 2025, the room will remain a space where differing perspectives can intersect. The Seasonal Gallery (former Native American Gallery) reopened with *A Surreal Place: Sky Hopinka and Cannupa Hanska Luger*, two video-based artworks by Indigenous artists reflecting on a sense of place. These three exhibitions, grounded in Indigenous frameworks showcasing the living presence of Native communities, are the first of their kind for The Trustees.



Kathy Ruttenberg, "A Snail's Pace," 2018. Cast silicon bronze, polychrome patina, cast acrylic, ceramic, cast polyurethane resin, and LED lighting. 74 x 114 x 48 inches. Courtesy of the Artist and Lyles & King, New York. Photo by Mel Taing.

DECORDOVA SCULPTURE PARK AND MUSEUM

While improvements on the indoor exhibition spaces are ongoing, the Sculpture Park continues to program new and evocative installations. In August, New York-based artist Kathy Ruttenberg unveiled *A Snail's Pace*, which depicts a fantastical tableau of a life-sized woman crouched within a translucent snail shell. Ruttenberg notes, "Perhaps it is better to be in the 'bubble,' moving like a snail, protected from life's hectic pace." In October, the PLATFORM series debuted a new large-scale billboard and five small signs scattered throughout the park. Depicting the Ghana-based artist Zohra Opoku's face partially covered by different plants, *Self-Portraits* marries her search for belonging with a desire for camouflage.

Many exciting new exhibitions are planned for 2025, including *Nature Sanctuary* at deCordova, a *Historic Collections Show on the Shakers* at Fruitlands, and a new *Art & the Landscape* installation.



REPATRIATING NATIVE OBJECTS



A two-volume Bible and four-piece pewter Communion set were among the first items repatriated to the Stockbridge-Munsee Community. Image courtesy of the Arvid E. Miller Library/Museum.

When properties are donated to The Trustees, the previous owners' collections housed on those properties are usually gifted as well. Two Trustees places—The Mission House and Fruitlands Museum—came with extensive collections of Native artifacts which had been amassed by Mabel Choate and Clara Endicott Sears respectively. Many of these objects had been purchased from dealers who often acquired them under dubious circumstances.

For many years The Trustees has been committed to identifying and repatriating these objects. From the first dialogues about repatriation to current endeavors to investigate every Native artifact in the organization's collections, the focus has been on building robust relationships with the communities who are the items' rightful owners. "The objects in our collections hold significant cultural meaning to tribal communities," said Mark Wilson, Trustees Director of Historic Collections and Archives. "We need to make sure they know we have these objects and share all the information we can about what happened to them once they left the tribal community."

The Trustees has been actively working on repatriating tribal items from its Mission House collection for decades, but Wilson and the team are now spurred on by a revision to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) that went into effect in January 2024. The new regulations implement a forceful "Duty of Care" to all museums, nonprofits, and federal agencies that have Native objects in their collections and grant Indigenous communities a stronger authority throughout the repatriation process. These new NAGPRA alterations provide a catalyst to take a comprehensive inventory of the substantial collections gifted to The Trustees by Mabel Choate and Clara Endicott Sears (among others).







Above (left): Trustees Director of Historic Collections and Archives Mark Wilson in front of the "Our Lands, Our Home, Our Heart" exhibit at The Mission House; Above (right): A majority of the Trustees' Indigenous objects were gifted to the organization as part of the collections of Mabel Choate (seen at The Mission House in the early 1950s, left) and Clara Endicott Sears (right).

A STEP AHEAD

Since the 1970s—years before NAGPRA went into effect—the organization has been in dialogue with the Stockbridge-Munsee Community about Mabel Choate's collections at The Mission House. In 1990, a two-volume Bible set, gifted to the Community in 1745 and preached from by missionary John Sergeant at The Mission House, was the first item returned, building a foundation of trust and paving the way for future collaborations. Now 34 years later, nearly three dozen additional objects have been returned to the Stockbridge-Munsee Community, including those of significant religious import like a four-piece pewter Communion set.

The return of each item results from years of conversations between Trustees staff and tribal community members. "Our discussions around the objects in The Trustees collections are always ongoing," said Wilson. "I've personally made two trips to the reservation in Wisconsin to speak with tribal members and have seen the life and vibrancy of the community there."

Part of that ongoing work includes *Our Lands*, *Our Home*, *Our Heart*—an indoor exhibit, garden of native plantings, and traditional medicine cabinet directly curated by the Stockbridge-Munsee's Cultural Affairs Department—at The Mission House. The property's Carriage House space, where the Community's exhibit is located, once held Mabel Choate's collection of Indigenous objects. Now, it's a place where the Stockbridge-Munsee Community can tell their own story in their own words. "By listening to tribal members and removing the Indigenous objects previously displayed in the Carriage House, we've opened a space where the Community can now share their own voice on their own homelands," said Wilson.

CONTINUING TO LISTEN

Listening to, and working with, Indigenous communities has not stopped at the historic collections. Months before the National Park Service began replacing derogatory names of the nation's geographic features in 2021, The Trustees worked with the Stockbridge-Munsee Community to rename Monument Mountain's peak. Previously named Squaw Peak—an ethnic and sexist slur in the Mohican language—its name was changed to "Peeskawso Peak" (pronounced / Pē: skāw. sō /), meaning "virtuous women."

Not only did this renaming allow the Stockbridge-Munsee Community to take back their history and right a wrong, but it also allowed members of the Community to reconnect with this sacred place on their homelands. "Whether it's the Mohican people or another Indigenous community, we are on tribal homelands everywhere we go in this organization," said Wilson. "It's important that our visitors understand and respect that when visiting any of our places."

WHERE WE GO FROM HERE

Even with the significant work thus far, The Trustees has a long way to go in building respectful relations with Indigenous communities like the Stockbridge-Munsee. The extensive nature of the historic collections—especially that of Clara Endicott Sears at Fruitlands Museum, which is the Trustees' largest—makes repatriation challenging.

It's estimated that the first step of inventorying every object will be a multi-year process. From there, each item will need to be cataloged with a history of ownership and usage since it left tribal lands, all while dialogues are opened with the multitude of Indigenous communities from across the nation to whom these objects belong. "We need to be honest about what happened to these objects with the Tribes," said Wilson. "It's important we're upfront about how they were acquired, housed, and displayed as we work to repatriate them to their proper owners."

The entire process is expected to take at least five years, but the start of the project in 2024 marks a major milestone in the repatriation work done so far by The Trustees. The daunting timeline doesn't deter Wilson, who will be leading the team in these substantial efforts. "By doing the inventory, we can understand what we have and how to forge ahead," said Wilson. "It's a big step forward for us and I'm excited to be a part of it."

MABEL CHOATE: PHOTO BY WILLIAM H. TAGUE; COURTESY OF THE TRUSTEES ARCHIVES & RESEARCH CENTER, MISSION HOUSE COLLECTION. CLARA ENDICOTT SEARS: COURTESY OF THE TRUSTEES ARCHIVES & RESEARCH CENTER. FRUITLANDS MUSEUM COLLECTION.

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Diversity, Belonging, Inclusion & Equity

Right: A group from Trustees' partner Latino Outdoors enjoys a summer evening at Dunes' Edge Campground in Provincetown; Below: The Trustees float was a big hit at the Boston Pride for the People parade in June.

priority for the past several years, The Trustees' strategic planning process in 2024 identified Diversity, Belonging, Inclusion, and Equity (DBIE) as a core pillar of the upcoming five-year strategic plan, demonstrating the organization's commitment to making DBIE integral to bolstering inclusive access for all now and for future generations to come.

EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUPS

At The Trustees, we have two employee resource groups (ERGs): Trustees' Pride, led by LGBTQIA+ employees, and Conservation in Color, led by BIPOC employees. Supporting The Trustees' commitment to creating more inclusive and welcoming spaces, this year they led the organization's first participation in the Boston Pride Parade, organized learning opportunities for the broader organization, and served as advisors on issues affecting the communities they represent.



SENSORY-FRIENDLY PROGRAMMING

PROVINCETOWN

DUNES' EDGE CAMPGROUND

Sensory-friendly and Social Stories events at Trustees properties grew in 2024, offering guests a quieter environment to enjoy our special places. Sensory kits designed for neurodiverse children and adultsprovided through a partnership with Autism Alliance—were made available for visitors at six reservations: Appleton, Powisset, and Weir River farms, deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, The FARM Institute, and Naumkeag. Social Stories are now available at deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, Powisset Farm, Rocky Woods, and Weir River Farm.

PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY

Improvements were made to many Trustees properties to better welcome visitors of different abilities. At World's End, visitors had access to a GRIT Freedom Chair—an all-terrain wheelchair designed to provide greater accessibility and independence for individuals with mobility challenges—during the summer. Francis William Bird Park received a newly accessible entrance off Polley Lane and improvement of pedestrian pathways and recreational facilities. A new Discovery Trail at Copicut Woods was also unveiled over the summer. This quarter-mile accessible path, the first of its kind for The Trustees, is designed to inspire children and adults to engage with nature around them.

PARTNERSHIPS

The Trustees partnered with several BIPOC-led organizations—including Boston While Black, Latino Outdoors, Boston Harbor Women of Color Coalition, and People of Color in Environment (POCIE)—to broaden access to our properties and programs and to engage more diverse communities. Additionally, we conducted listening sessions with BIPOC leaders in outdoor recreation and equity and inclusion spaces to gather insights on how to strengthen a sense of belonging across our properties and throughout our organization.

WORKING WITH INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

The Trustees has a decades-long history of working with Indigenous artists and tribes on exhibitions, programming, repatriation, and renamings. This year marked a new chapter in this work, spurred by recent revisions to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (see Repatriating Native Objects, pages 14-15.) Also, in recent years, several Trustees landmarks have been renamed with input from tribal community members, and spaces have been created where Indigenous voices can share their own stories. We are continuously listening and learning as we remain committed to building, strengthening, and sustaining partnerships with local Indigenous communities.

Fostering a Family Legacy of Conservation

or Lia and Andy Wainwright, protecting open space, preserving farmland, and supporting The Trustees is more than just an important cause, it's a family legacy. A Trustees member for more than 30 years, Lia has memories of spending days outside at Trustees properties in her youth—her uncle, Fred Winthrop, served as the organization's executive director from 1985-2000.

"I remember standing on the steps at Crane as a teenager and conducting surveys of what people thought of the place and what The Trustees could do to improve," Lia said. "A sense of conservation has always been in our family."

The Wainwrights have been Trustees volunteers and supporters for years and have passed on that passion for conservation to their two daughters. They also hope to leave an enduring legacy of conservation through planned giving. In 2018, Lia and Andy joined the Semper Virens Society by making the

special decision to include a bequest to The Trustees in their will. "We can't really imagine having a will without a spot for philanthropy at The Trustees," Andy said.

Living in Hamilton, the Wainwrights have made countless trips over the years to places like Crane Beach and Appleton Farms, taking in the natural beauty of the landscapes and enjoying the events and programming at each property, whether outdoor concerts at the Crane Estate or summer camps and the communitysupported agriculture program (CSA) at Appleton Farms.

"The CSA has been such a huge part of the community," Lia said. "We go weekly. We love that if you take a kid and show them what a carrot looks like and how to pull it out of the ground it really makes an impact on them knowing where their food comes from."

Beyond fostering a love of the outdoors and a passion for protecting it, Lia and Andy

also want to keep their family involved in conservation in a hands-on way. Andy recalls bringing his daughters, now in their mid 20s, on a volunteer trip to the Crane Estate when they were younger. "We went on a volunteer trip to Choate Island to collect the plastic netting that had washed up on the shore," Andy said. "As Lia was throwing herself into volunteering, we were all getting involved."

Lia first joined Trustees governance as a Corporate Trustee in 2004 and has since served on numerous volunteer boards and committees, including several event and property committees on the North Shore. "When you visit Trustees properties they have a really special quality to them," Lia said. "There is such robust programming and interpretation, and the organization makes such good use of the properties by making them available to everyone. They really are unique."

For the Wainwrights, their legacy gift is an acknowledgement of how important The Trustees is to them today and a promise to preserve these special places for the future. "Trustees properties have been such a valuable part of our life here on the North Shore," Lia said. "If we don't protect these landscapes now, we can't protect them later."



Governance Volunteers

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Contact Julie Lazarus, at 978,338,1172 or mylegacy@thetrustees.org, to learn more about how these gifts can help you meet your financial and philanthropic goals. If you have already named us in your estate plans, please let us know so we can honor your generosity through The Semper Virens Society.

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Corporate Trustees, along with Life Trustees, are the voting members of the organization. Each year at the Annual Meeting, they elect Board of Directors and Advisory Board, as well as new Corporate Trustees and Life Trustees.

For the list of Corporate Trustees, please visit our website at thetrustees.org/governance

Trustees Governance, as elected at the 133rd Annual Meeting, November 7, 2024.

The Semper Virens Society

Semper Virens, which means "always green," honors and recognizes generous individuals who have made a legacy gift to The Trustees. Since the first recorded bequest in 1902, support via wills and life income gifts has built and strengthened the Trustees mission. This strong financial base has provided important stability, enabling The Trustees to secure important landscapes and landmarks, acquire new reservations, implement innovative stewardship, share our conservation mission, and promote ongoing protection of threatened land across the state. We are delighted to list the members of the Semper Virens Society. In making a planned gift, these individuals have

turned their passion into a legacy, and set an inspiring example for others to follow. Anonymous (27) Ms. Rosamond W. Aller Lindsay and Blake Allison Mr. Manuel Fernando Álvarez-González Judith Ann Amelotte Ms. Christine G. Anastos Louis F. and Mary W. Andrews Josephine H. Ashley Mr. William S. Babbitt Ms. Kate Barnhart Jeannette Harvey Bart and Walter J. Bart. Jr Elisabeth Bayle Mr. Christopher M. Beaa Mr. David A. Behnke, Jr. and Mr. Paul F. Doherty, Jr. Ed Belove and Laura Roberts Priscilla and Andy Bender Carole Berkowitz Neil Berman Rene Berry MaryEllen Beveridge Mr. and Mrs. Adolfo Bezamat Deborah M. Blake Gwen M. Blodgett, AIA Ms. Cynthia C. Bloomquist and Mr. Thaw Malin. III Philip H. Brewer Corey W. and Donna M. Briggs Loring C. Brinckerhoff Mr. Edward Broach and Mr. Caleb Broach Mr. and Mrs. Richard A. Brockelman Peter Brooks Cornelia W. Brown

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