



KESTREL LAND TRUST

KESTREL LAND TRUST ANNOUNCES NEW INITIATIVES IN NORTHAMPTON

February 9, 2012 -- Kestrel Land Trust announced today two new initiatives to promote land conservation and stewardship in Northampton.

Kestrel Land Trust is forming a new Northampton Committee founded by the board members of Nonotuck Land Fund, Inc. NLF formed seven years ago as a grassroots land conservation

organization and helped protect nearly 300 acres in the northwest portion of Northampton, most recently the 168 acre Marble Brook parcel in Leeds. The NLF board has decided that it can more effectively work towards land protection in Northampton from within the larger Kestrel organization and therefore will dissolve as a separate corporation. NLF board members will join the newly established Northampton Committee to help carry out the conservation, stewardship, and community engagement work of Kestrel Land Trust in the city. This move deepens Kestrel's commitment west of the Connecticut River, following last year's merger of The Kestrel Trust and Valley Land Fund to cover a 19-town region surrounding Amherst and Northampton.

"We have long admired the work of The Kestrel Trust, and are delighted to become part of this stellar organization now that it has expanded into Northampton and its surrounding communities," said Adele Franks, Nonotuck Land Fund board member.

Kestrel Land Trust also reached an agreement this week with the City of Northampton's Office of Planning and Development, in which the Trust will hold Conservation Restrictions (CR) on over 400 acres of land within eight city-owned conservation areas in the Saw Mill Hills, Mineral Hills, Mill River Greenway, and Broad Brook-Fitzgerald Lake Greenway. The conservation areas were originally funded in part with Community Preservation Act funds, and the conveyance of the CRs to Kestrel fulfills the Community Preservation Act requirement for a third-party conservation organization to hold a CR. Kestrel's new Northampton Committee will participate in the annual monitoring of these conservation areas to ensure their good stewardship in perpetuity.

"We are extremely pleased with this agreement. It provides us with a cost-effective way to address our CPA responsibilities and expand our partnership with Kestrel at the same time," said Wayne Feiden, Northampton Director of Planning and Development.

On the land conservation front, Kestrel's Northampton Committee has already started working to help protect another 121 acres in the Mineral Hills Conservation Area in Northampton and Westhampton, building on the nearby 87-acre

conservation purchase in 2011. NLF's \$5,000 remaining funds will be used as a challenge grant to help fill the \$40,000 remaining funding gap for the "Bookends" expansion of this popular conservation area.

Kestrel Land Trust's Northampton Committee will sponsor a wildlife tracking walk open to the public in the Mineral Hills of Florence this Sunday, February 12 from 2-4pm. The event is free and open to the public, but participants are asked to pre-register by calling 413-549-1097.

"As Kestrel Land Trust builds its community connections west of the river, Kestrel welcomes these committed conservationists as well as new volunteers to help conserve and steward land in Northampton," said Robert Jonas, Kestrel Board of Trustees Vice-Chair and Northampton resident.