



**KESTREL
LAND TRUST**

CONSERVE THE VALLEY YOU LOVE

November 2016

Dear friend of the Valley,

Among the many challenges facing our world today, **the climate crisis likely weighs as heavily on your heart and mind** as it does mine. Everyone who cares about the future we leave to our children knows that **we urgently need solutions to this global crisis.**

Like many of us, I'm sure you've made lifestyle changes to reduce your carbon footprint, but often that doesn't feel like enough.

How can we do more to respond locally to such an enormous global crisis? **Protecting forests is a meaningful and hopeful way** to address a crisis that needs many solutions. And as supporters of land conservation, you and I have an essential role to play in that effort.



Forests are a key to the well-being of the planet we will leave to our children.

In September, the United Nations Paris Climate Agreement prioritized forest conservation as an integral strategy for addressing climate change. **Forests—the lungs of the Earth—**produce oxygen and capture and store carbon. **In the US alone, forests absorb 15% of carbon emissions annually.** Weaning our civilization from fossil fuels through energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies is essential, but it is not enough.

Forest conservation is a natural climate solution.

We are fortunate to live in one of the most forested regions on the planet. However, much of this land is still unprotected. With your support, **Kestrel Land Trust is advancing several key forest conservation projects that will boost our region's resilience to climate change.**

- **In Pelham,** Kestrel is collaborating with the University of Massachusetts to create a 150-acre **demonstration forest** that will model management practices to make forests more **resilient to climate change;**

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- **In Westhampton and Williamsburg**, Kestrel, Hilltown Land Trust, and The Nature Conservancy are teaming up with multiple landowners to apply for a **Massachusetts Landscape Partnership grant to protect nearly 1,000-acres of contiguous forest**;
- Finally, we are working for sustainable forestry by **permanently protecting 2,000 acres of private land with the aid of a U.S. Forest Legacy grant**. This forested land, just west of the Quabbin Reservoir, also filters drinking water for the Atkins Reservoir in Amherst.

Our region's forests offer us so much: *clean water and air, quiet glens to enjoy solitude, trails to hike, streams to fish in—and a reminder that we share this Valley with a rich natural community of bear, moose, otter, coyote, and more.*

Thanks to the Paris Climate Agreement, 195 countries—including our own—have now acknowledged that **forests also give us hope**: Hope that we can help stop the worst of the climate crisis and restore a resilient planet for our common future.

As our region races to reduce its carbon footprint by adopting clean, renewable energy sources, conservation supporters like you and I also have a key role to play in advancing solutions to climate change—right here in the forests where we go for respite from our daily cares.

With the enclosed envelope, you can contribute to the solution today. By supporting Kestrel, you'll protect the forests that will help our region adapt to a changing climate.

Forest conservation is not only a practical solution to climate change, it's also a solution that is truly its own reward. Thank you for making it possible for Kestrel to conserve more of the forests you love in the year ahead. **Let's take action together for the future of our Valley and our planet.**

Kristin DeBoer, Executive Director



An aerial view of the 2,000 acres between Atkins Reservoir and the Quabbin Reservoir—on deck for protection in 2017!