



Photo Credit: Sussie Holzberlein

# Ashby Land Trust

## Annual Report 2021

We are happy to share our successes and challenges with all of you as we close out our 23rd year of the the Ashby Land Trust. Like many people, we were very happy to put 2020 in the rearview mirror and embrace 2021. The year brought us together, even if still on Zoom, and we were able to engage with our community in outdoor events. We are looking forward to seeing everyone in this coming year as well. Thank you for sharing this past year with us.

## President's Report



Photo Credit: Rebecca Walsh



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In becoming the new president of the ALT, I extend my gratitude to outgoing president Jeanie Lindquist. She has been president for the last 5 years and previously president for the beginning 5 years of ALT's existence. Jeanie has been in a leadership role in obtaining the ALT's initial accreditation as well the recent accreditation renewal. She has led with knowledge, grace and kindness. I am personally appreciative of her continuing support and work as an ALT Board member. We look forward to her continued expertise.

In 2021, we continued to meet online due to the coronavirus. We had an online annual meeting as well, with Sonia McCallum presenting a very interesting talk on "The Rights of Nature".

The Land Trust sponsored three hikes this year, Laurel Hike, Blood Hill and Jewell Hill; they were led by members of the Board of Directors. Happily, we had an in-person Duck Race which was very successful and well attended.

The website has been updated and we have an active Facebook site.

The first half of the year, we continued working with the Nashua River Watershed Association on a new Forest Legacy application. It was submitted in July and we now wait to hear if the application was successful.

I would like to thank the Board of Directors for their support and look forward to working together as we move forward during times that are challenging to our beautiful and life sustaining natural habitat.

Vicki Mickola, President



Photo Credit: Rebecca Walsh





Photo Credit: Dan Ewald



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## Land Protection Endeavors

In 2021 the Ashby Land Trust partnered with the Nashua-Squannacook-Nissitissit Stewardship Council and numerous other land trusts and conservation organizations in the completion of a watershed-wide application to the federal Forest Legacy Program. The Forest Legacy Program is a "willing seller" program where landowners with suitable properties may, at their discretion, sell conservation easements on their forested properties to the federal government. The landowner sells the development rights but keeps the property.

The process of completing the Forest Legacy application took most of 2021. The completed Forest Legacy application was favorably reviewed at the state level in September 2021 and was forwarded to federal reviewers, where the federal review process may take several years to complete. The Ashby Land Trust's role in the process was to reach out to and identify interested property owners, provide technical assistance during the process, and provide advocacy for inclusion of suitable Ashby properties in the final Forest Legacy application. Three Ashby properties totaling more than 200 acres were included in the Forest Legacy Application.

This work builds on the Land Trust's involvement in several prior Forest Legacy applications, which have resulted in the protection of a number of properties in town.

The Land Trust has also acted as an intermediary and local resource for the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation and the MA Department of Fish and Wildlife on local land conservation matters.





Photo Credit: Dan Ewald

## Duck Race

The 6<sup>th</sup> annual Ashby Rubber Duck Derby returned with great fanfare to an in-person event in 2021! 701 rubber ducks made their valiant way along the banks, around the rocks, and through the eddies to the finish line with the help of our many volunteer sweepers. Some 50 crew and spectators lined the banks at Willard Brook State Forest to watch and help on a day that in a rare event was free of rain.

The 2022 race will be held May 1<sup>st</sup> at 1pm at Damon Pond. Look for us at the town election on April 25 to purchase a flock of our remaining ducks or call Doug the Duckmaster at 386-5304 to reserve your ducks. Come on race day, grab a broom and help keep this growing tradition alive.



Photo Credit: Doug Leab



Photo Credit: Dan Ewald



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## Conserved Properties

Since our founding in 1998, the Ashby Land Trust has worked steadily to preserve the natural resources and rural character of our town. The Ashby Land Trust holds Conservation Restrictions (CR) on five properties in town, wholly owns one parcel, and owns a share of Mount Watatic.

**Morrison Property** 3 acres– wetlands; owned by Town of Ashby; CR held by ALT - 1999

**South Road Fields** 12 acres – open fields in center of town, managed for nesting birds; owned by Town of Ashby, CR held by ALT - 2000

**Wiita Conservation Land** 170 acres– forests rising to highest summit in Middlesex County; owned by Town of Ashby, CR co-held by ALT and North County Land Trust - 2001

**Arnold Property** 15 acres – fields and forests; ownership retained by landowner, no public access; CR co-held by ALT and New England Forestry Foundation - 2003

**Mount Watatic** 280 acres– west facing slope and summit of the last undeveloped bald-top mountain east of the Berkshires; owned in a partnership of 6 parties - 2004

**Douglas Wetland** 5.5 acres – Donated to ALT 2019

**Ewald Property** 35 acres forest, streams and waterfalls - ownership retained by landowner, no public access; CR held by ALT – 2019

In addition to the parcels above, working with our public and private partners, we have helped protect over 1000 additional acres of land.



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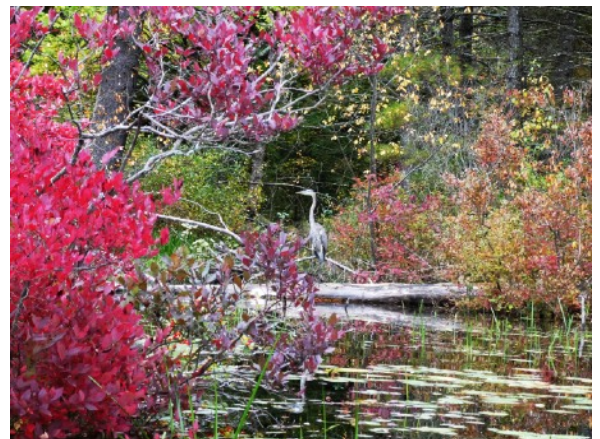


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# Monitoring Report

The annual monitoring of each of the Land Trust's protected properties is a legal responsibility once a Conservation Restriction is created. The most important aspect of a CR is keeping the property preserved in perpetuity in the manner specified by the consenting landowner and approved by the State. For example, the South Road Fields are required to remain as open fields and the Wiita Conservation Land is to be managed to enhance wildlife. Some CRs allow public access and some don't; either way these lands enhance the rural character of Ashby, preserve valuable resources such as clean water, forests and wildlife, and are a tool in fighting climate change.

Monitoring responsibilities for the Ashby Land Trust include the South Road Fields, Morrison Property, Ewald Property, Wiita Conservation Land (Blood Hill) shared with the North County Land Trust and the Arnold Property shared with the New England Forestry Foundation (NEFF). The Douglas Wetland is inspected annually as well, as the Land Trust is the owner.

There were no encroachments to deal with this year, but there are the ongoing issues with motorized vehicles on the Wiita Conservation Land. The spread of invasive plants, (oriental bittersweet and multiflora rose) particularly on the wooded edges of South Road Fields is an increasing problem. These non-native invasive plants crowd out native species and have a detrimental effect on wildlife, particularly pollinators. Research has shown that pollinators, which include many insects and some animals, are critical to sustaining a healthy flowering plant population as well as all the creatures that rely on them as a source of food and shelter... which includes us. The Ashby Land Trust is committed to keeping a healthy and diverse environment.

Thank you to Doug Leab and Rebecca Walsh for their work in monitoring this past year. We also want to thank our colleagues at North County Land Trust and NEFF for their collaboration in monitoring Blood Hill and the Arnold Property.

We are sorry that Doug is leaving the monitoring committee. His expertise as a former forester was an invaluable asset especially in marking & identifying boundaries. His participation will be sorely missed. Thank you, Doug for all your work and ideas!!

We need people to help us in our monitoring responsibilities, if you appreciate open land and like to hike and learn about our lands' please get in touch with us.

Thank you, Bob Leary

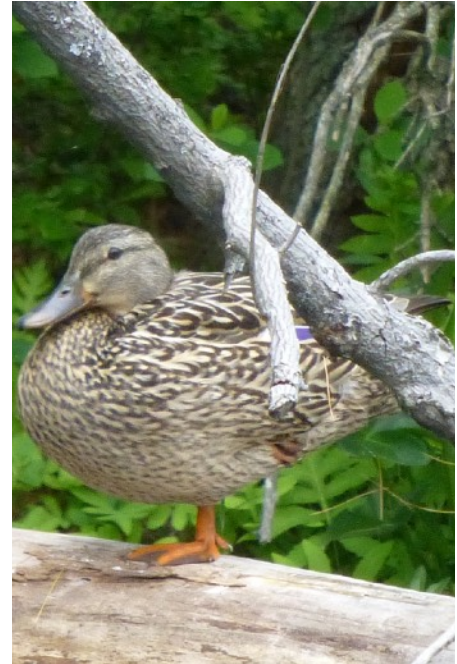


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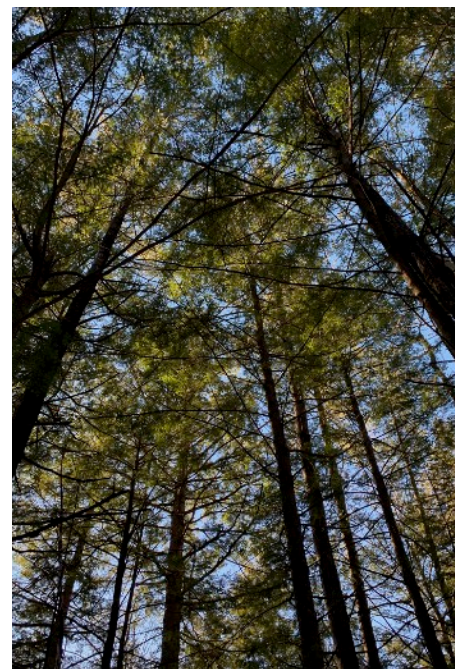


Photo Credit: Dan Ewald



### **Board Members**

Vicki Mickola, President  
Tiffany Call, Vice President  
Doug Leab, Treasurer  
Rebecca Walsh, Clerk  
Dan Ewald  
Bob Leary  
Jeanie Lindquist  
Mike McCallum  
Cedwyn Morgan

### **Lifetime Members**

Bill Arnold  
Chris & Alan Ewald  
Janet Morrison

### **Sponsors**

Newsham Family  
Doug Leab

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Garry & Diana Baer  
Robert & Marina Bertram  
Stephanie Cassano & Alfred Crocker  
Murray Cox

Roberta Flashman  
Cathy Kristofferson  
Bob Leary & Janet Flinkstrom  
Michael McCallum & Jeanie Lindquist  
Julie & Dave McIntyre  
Vicki & John Mickola  
Chris Nash  
Judith & Mark Sumner  
Jane Pankosky

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Bob Bedard  
Cathy Biliouris & Cindy Zwicker  
Tiffany Call & Matt Leonard  
Nancy Catalini  
Sue Chapman  
Sheldon & Kathy Herrick-Cowen  
William Davis, Joan Jason, Erik Stackhouse  
Eric Evans & Conna Weiner  
Al Futterman & Deirdre Haynie  
Rod Gaudreau  
Mark & Nancy Haines

Bob & Betsy Higgins-Steele  
Sussie Holzerberlein  
Krishnabai  
Donna Leonard  
Jerry Manney  
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Richard Muehlke  
M&M Mullins  
Jenny Murphy  
Kathy Panagiotes  
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Ann & Barry Peterson  
Norm & Jo Ann Pierce  
James Piper  
Lois & Bob Raymond  
Anne Reggio  
Sara & Conrad Sanford  
Cec Snow & Claire Deucher  
Wayne & Linda Stacy  
Kate Stacy  
Marion Stoddart  
Lennart & Grace Swanson  
Rebecca Walsh



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FUND	BEGINNING BALANCE 1/1/21	INCOME	EXPENSE	ENDING BALANCE 12/31/21	
STEWARDSHIP TOTAL	\$ 16,778	\$ 94	\$ -	\$ 16,871	
DEFENSE FUND TOTAL	\$ 5,228			\$ 5,228	
ACCREDITATION GRANT TOTAL	\$ 2,437	\$ -	\$ (840)	\$ 1,597	
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$ 8,977	\$ 5,329	\$ (3,953)	\$ 10,353	
2021 TOTAL	\$ 33,419	\$ 5,329	\$ (4,793)	\$ 34,049	\$ 630



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