

What is Monitoring? Why do we do it?



A Conservation Restriction (CR) is a binding document whose intent is to protect a designated piece of property from development and unintended use. Conservation Restrictions are placed on a property by the landowner and approved by the Commonwealth. They travel with the property in perpetuity even as the property changes ownership. An independent third party, in this case the ALT, accepts responsibility for ensuring that the wishes of the original owners, as spelled out in the CR, are maintained through the annual monitoring.

Monitoring is simply walking the boundaries of the properties the Ashby Land Trust is charged with protecting. Land owners are contacted in advance and encouraged to join us as we monitor the protected land. Monitoring on a regular basis not only helps us track violations of the restriction, but it also helps us see some unwanted natural changes in the landscape.

Of note in our 2017 monitoring were two violations requiring attention and intervention. First, the South Road Fields, located on South Road, have an increasing problem with two invasive species, Multiflora rose and Bittersweet. Invasive species can be controlled, but the method is work intensive, costly, or both. The Land Trust will work with the owners to look for possible solutions.

Second, the Wiita Conservation Land, also known as Blood Hill, continues to see ATV use. The CR for this property expressly states that no motorized vehicles are allowed except those used to maintain the property. While we want to encourage people to benefit from the recreational resources that the Wiita family has provided, we are also required to stop non-permitted practices on protected land. As a first effort, the Land Trust has marked the boundaries with boundary signs and placed “No Motorized Vehicles” signs at various points. Unfortunately, the “No Motorized Vehicles” signs were promptly torn down. We are aware ATV use on conservation is a problem many conservation organizations face, and we have been in communication with other Land Trusts and Conservation groups in an effort to find an effective solution.

We will continue to prioritize the monitoring of all properties we are entrusted to protect.

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