

# Ashby Land Trust



## Annual Report 2022

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### Another Great Year

We are so pleased to have shared another year with all of you. 2022 was marked by frequent community engagements, such as an edible hike and tracking class, it was wonderful to see so many of you throughout the year. We had an accepted Forest Legacy application and renewed our accreditation. So many wonderful things took place this year. Read on to hear them all.

# President's Report

Greetings to our valued Ashby Land Trust members and friends. We are grateful for your support that encourages our work in conserving and monitoring land in our beautiful town. We hope that you will spread the word to others who may also have an interest.

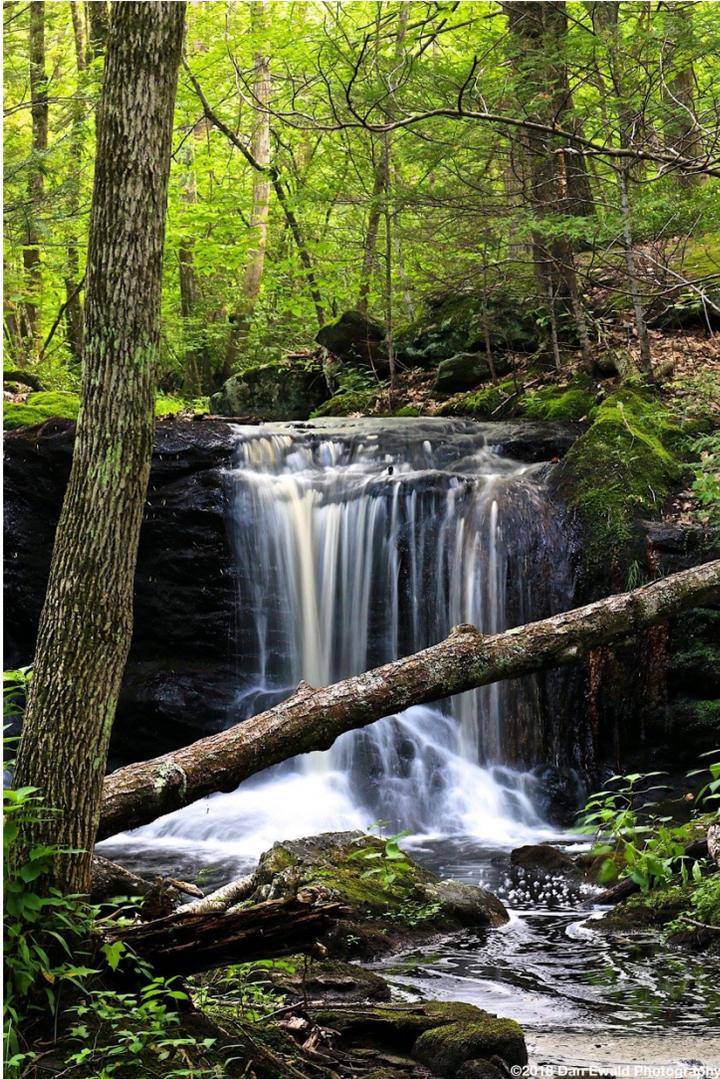
I would like to share my family's story as an example of the benefits of land conservation and the Ashby Land Trust. My husband and I feel so fortunate to live in this place where my husband's grandfather bought land after leaving Finland. The story goes that the people his grandfather bought the land from felt that the land was of little use as it had been "farmed out". However, John's grandfather knew how to improve and take care of the land and he was able to have a good life on the farm. As a result of learning more about sustainable land practices and with gratitude for what we had been given we wanted to put the land in some sort of conservation. The land is an important watershed property. And we wanted to provide space for the flora and fauna that exists on the property. We also wanted to help provide a healthy future for the generations of people that come after us. So, we jumped at the opportunity to put a conservation restriction on the property. With the help of the Ashby Land Trust as well as other agencies and individuals we became part of a successful Forest Legacy application. The land is now conserved in perpetuity, we hope for the benefit of all.

In 2022 we led several walks and outdoor programs; had another successful and fun Duck Race; monitored all of the properties for which we are responsible and continued working with landowners who are interested in conserving their property. We are developing an online fundraising site where you can purchase ALT clothing. We also continue to work on having an improved and up to date website. Like our Facebook site to see what's happening!

I am so appreciative of the work and knowledge of our Land Trust board of directors to enable all of this to happen.

We are pleased to be a relevant and useful asset in the enrichment of the Ashby land and community. Please do not hesitate to contact us.

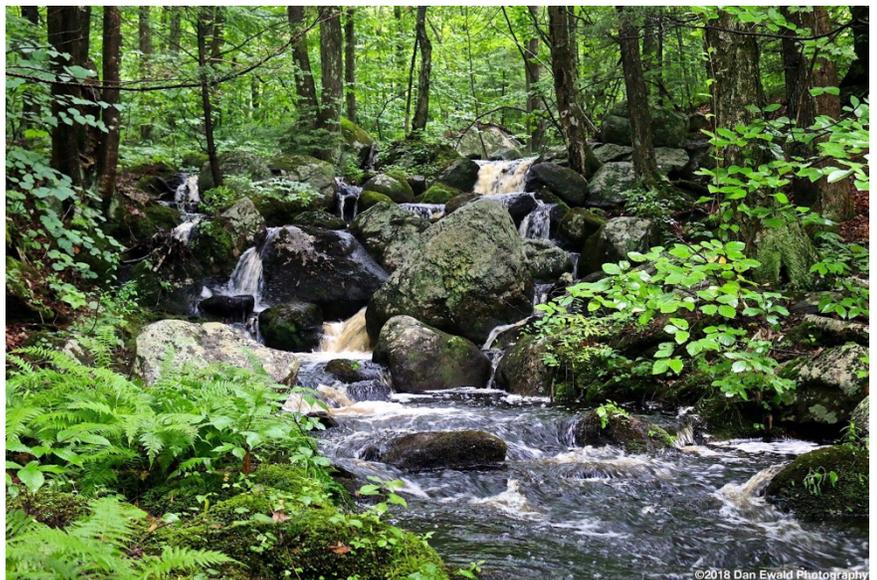
Vicki Mickola, President



## Land Protection Report

The Ashby Land Trust worked with the Nashua, Squannacook, and Nissitissit Rivers Wild and Scenic Stewardship Council for Ashby's component of a watershed-wide Forest Legacy Program (FLP) application. The FLP is administered by the US Forest Service and the MA Dept. of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), and funds the purchase of permanent conservation easements from willing landowners to protect environmentally important forest areas that are threatened by conversion to non-forest uses. FLP funding is a competitive process, and the application submitted in 2021 just missed the funding cutoff. The application was revised and re-submitted in 2022, and includes two Ashby properties totaling about 130 acres.

The application was recommended for funding by DCR and is currently in review by the US Forest Service. The Land Trust also worked to facilitate sale of a small landlocked parcel in northwestern Ashby to Massachusetts Dept. of Fisheries and Wildlife, and is currently exploring the potential for conservation easements with two Ashby landowners.

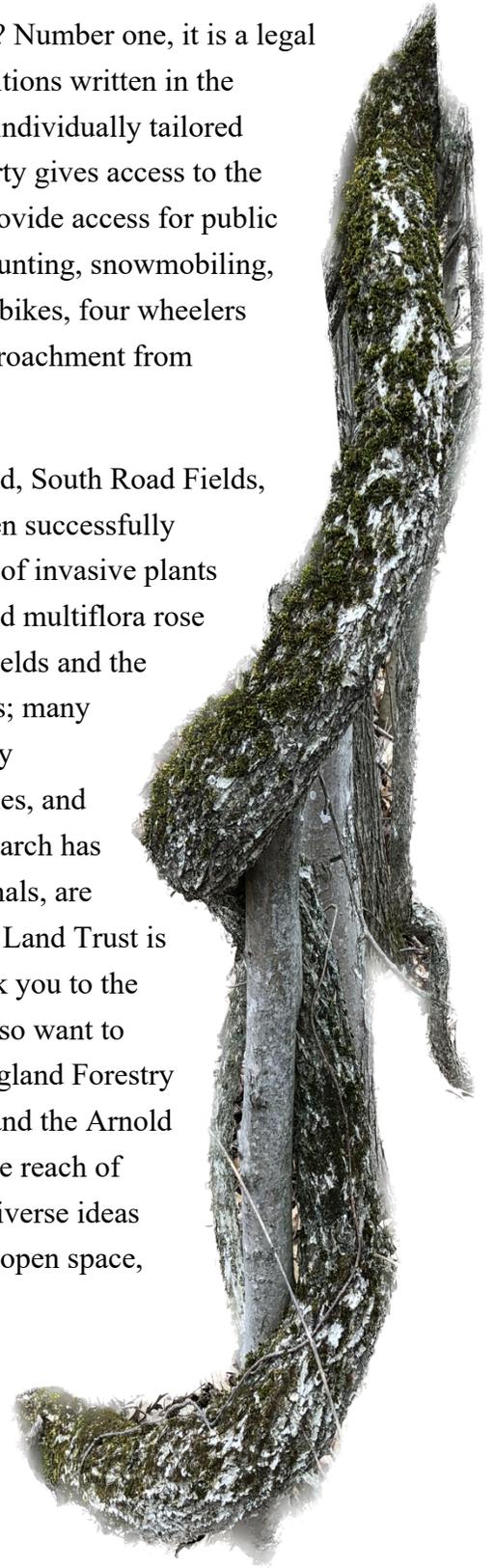


# Monitoring report for 2022

Why is monitoring of conservation restricted properties important? Number one, it is a legal responsibility of the Land Trust to ensure every year that the conditions written in the conservation restriction have been honored. Each property has an individually tailored description of its intended use, including whether or not the property gives access to the public. All restrictions preclude development of the land. Some provide access for public hiking and other passive recreation activities, while others allow hunting, snowmobiling, mountain biking. Many restrict the use of motorized vehicles, dirt bikes, four wheelers and the like. All properties are monitored to ensure there is no encroachment from adjoining properties.

All our monitoring responsibilities for the Wiita Conservation Land, South Road Fields, Morrison Property, Arnold Property, and Ewald Property have been successfully completed. There still remains a growing problem with the spread of invasive plants (Oriental bittersweet, Black Swallow-wort, Japanese Knotweed and multiflora rose to name a few) particularly on the wooded edges of South Road Fields and the field area of the Arnold Property. These are not isolated incidences; many open areas and woodland edges around town are being increasingly affected. 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 key to sustaining healthy flowering plant populations. The Ashby Land Trust is committed to preserving a healthy and diverse environment. Thank you to the monitoring team for their work in monitoring this past year. We also want to thank our co-stake holders, North County Land Trust and New England Forestry Foundation for their collaboration with Wiita Conservation Land and the Arnold Property. These joint efforts help build our capacity and expand the reach of each of these fine organizations, ease the work load and bring in diverse ideas and expertise. Together we work for a common goal of protecting open space, wildlife, and the environment.

Bob Leary





## Monthly COA Hikes

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month, weather permitting, the Ashby Land Trust leads a hike in conjunction with the Ashby Council of Aging. These hikes range from mildly hilly and wooded, to beautiful flat rail trails that are wheelchair accessible. We strive for a good mix of terrain that offers something for all abilities throughout the year. The Squannacook River Rail Trail in townsend opened this year. We were thrilled to not only get out there as soon as it opened, but get a guided tour and talk of its build from inception to completion by Joan Watkowitz. Many thanks to Joan! We hiked Willard Brook, Jewell Hill, the Mason Rail Trail...it was a fun year of old standbys and new explorations.



## Wild Eyes Wilderness Edibles Hike



In July, we offered a delicious and informative Wild Edibles Hike with Owl Eyes Wilderness, hosted by Tim Swanson. It was amazing to discover that before we even entered the woods, there were edible plants growing in the cracks of the pavement by the gate. Tim Swanson was a font of knowledge about wild edible plants. He also shared the ethos of eating from the land, ensuring what you take can be replenished. This included talking about plants that simply shouldn't be harvested at all due to their scarcity or difficulty overcoming being depleted. We were also told about plants we needn't worry about harvesting as they are so common and prolific. Cue the little pink flowers growing from the cracks in the concrete at the start of our adventure. Beyond simply tasting some wild edibles, we were treated to a fascinating culinary journey and a deeper appreciation for the common plants and trees we see every day.





## Meteor Shower Viewing

A group of very hardy souls attended our Meteor Shower event using a telescope we borrowed from the library. It was a frigid but very clear night and although it was very hard to see the meteor showers we did see amazingly clear stars and we even saw the moons of Jupiter!

## Duck Derby

The 7<sup>th</sup> annual Ashby Rubber Duck Derby was held on May 1, 2022. In another sell-out 701 rubber ducks made their way down Willard Brook to Damon Pond in a highly competitive race. The ankle-deep water was ferocious but our intrepid Duck-Master wore his life vest and successfully withstood the flood!



With the low water there were a lot of stuck ducks but the kids had a ball sweeping them towards the finish line and all of them completed the race.

The 2023 race will be held on May 7 at 1pm. Ducks sold out November 11! Come out and join the fun as our ever more experienced ducklings vie for the prizes.

## 2022 Financial Report

FUND	BEGINNING BALANCE 1/1/22	INCOME	EXPENSE	ENDING BALANCE 12/31/22	NET INCOME OR (LOSS)
STEWARDSHIP TOTAL	\$ 16,872	\$ 221	-	\$ 17,092	
DEFENSE FUND TOTAL	\$ 5,228	-	-	\$ 5,228	
ACCREDITATION GRANT TOTAL	\$ 1,597		\$ (95)	\$ 1,502	
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$ 10,354	\$ 6,975	\$ (4,159)	\$ 13,170	
2022 TOTAL	\$ 34,051	\$ 7,196	\$ (4,254)	\$ 36,992	\$ 2,941

## Board Members & Membership List

### **Board Members**

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

### **Lifetime Members**

*Bill Arnold*  
*Chris & Alan Ewald*  
*Janet Morrison*

### **Sponsors**

*Doug Leab*  
*Newsham Family*

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*Chris Allen*  
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*Robert & Marina Bertram*  
*Ken & Karen Brown*  
*Murray Cox*  
*Roberta Flashman*  
*Janet Flinkstrom & Bob*  
*Leary Garry & Evie Gleckel*  
*Cathy Kristofferson*

*Michael McCallum & Jeanie*  
*Lindquist*  
*Dave & Julie McIntyre*  
*John & Vicki Mickola*  
*Chris Nash*  
*Judith & Mark Sumner*  
*Jane Pankosky*  
*Cec Snow & Clare Deucher*  
*Rebecca Walsh.*  
*Cedwyn & Martha Morgan*  
*Lennart & Grace Swanson*  
*Scott & Ingrid Sweeney*  
*Rebecca Walsh*

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*Bob Bedard*  
*Cathy Biliouris & Cindy*  
*Zwicker*  
*Nancy Catalini*  
*Sue Chapman*  
*William Davis, Joan, Jason*  
*& Erik Stackhouse.*  
*Eric Evans & Conna Weiner*  
*Crocker Stackhouse*  
*Eric Evans & Conna Weiner*  
*Dan Ewald*  
*Al Futterman & Deidre*

*Haynie Rod Gaudreau*  
*Sheldon & Kathy Herrick-*  
*Cowen*  
*Bob & Betsy Higgins-Steele*  
*Sussie Holzerberlein*  
*Andrew Johnson*  
*Krishnabai*  
*John & Claire Lavin*  
*Donna Leonard*  
*Anne & Jerry Manney*  
*Matthew & Carol McKew*  
*McNeil Family*  
*Cedwyn & Martha Morgan*  
*Richard Muehlke*  
*Mike & Margaret Mullins*  
*Jenny Murphy*  
*Kathy Panagiotis*  
*Alan & Lorraine Pease*  
*Ann & Barry Peterson*  
*Norm & JoAnn Pierce*  
*James Piper*  
*Lois & Bob Raymond*  
*Anne & Mike Reggio*  
*Sara & Conrad Sanford*  
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*Kate Stacy Marion Stoddart*  
*Lennart & Grace Swanson*