



Sudbury Valley Trustees

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Peppercorn Hill Conservation Area Gains 67 Acres

A year-long effort to conserve the 67-acre Kelly Property in the eastern part of Upton concluded in June, when the Town of Upton purchased three parcels of the property and Metacomet Land Trust (MLT) purchased the fourth. The property will now become part of the adjacent Peppercorn Hill Conservation Area.

The Kelly Property hosts mature forests, wetlands, streams, a vernal pool, and rocky outcrops. In addition, about 1 mile of the popular Peppercorn Hill trails crosses the property and offers a stunning view to the west from a scenic overlook.

“People who have visited the trails at the Peppercorn Hill Conservation Area in the past have likely walked across the Kelly Property without realizing that it wasn’t public land,” said Lisa Moczynski, President of MLT. “By protecting the property, the project partners have ensured that the public will always have full access to the entire trail network and can enjoy the view from atop Peppercorn Hill.”

MLT purchased its 25-acre parcel on June 15 with assistance from Sudbury Valley Trustees (SVT), a regional land trust that works in 36 communities.

MLT received a \$56,500 Conservation Partnership grant for the purchase from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. To close the gap in the purchase price and to cover costs such as legal fees, SVT secured additional grants from anonymous foundations, and the two member-supported land trusts worked together to solicit donations from private individuals.

“We are grateful to SVT for supporting this project and helping it to succeed,” said Moczynski. “MLT is also proud to have worked with the Town to expand the Peppercorn Hill Conservation Area, protect important wildlife habitat, and provide recreational opportunities for the public far into the future.”

The Town of Upton used \$156,908 of Community Preservation Funds to purchase its 42 acres on June 30. Town voters approved the use of these funds during a Special Town Meeting in November 2020.

SVT will hold conservation restrictions on all 67 acres and will annually monitor the land to ensure its critical ecological properties are protected.

“The Town is excited to partner with Sudbury Valley Trustees and the Metacomet Land Trust to continue to provide recreational opportunities to our residents as we add to the town’s treasured Peppercorn Hill Conservation Area.” said Maureen Dwinnell, Board of Selectmen Chair. “On behalf of the Board of Selectmen, I want to thank the members of the Conservation Commission for their leadership in preserving this land for future generations to enjoy.”

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After both deals closed, Meredith Houghton, SVT Land Protection Specialist, commented, "SVT believes it is important to act now in order to conserve precious open spaces such as the Kelly Property. We were delighted to collaborate with MLT and the Town to protect this land for the surrounding communities."

Houghton continued, "We also thank everyone, including over 70 area residents, who donated to the fundraising campaign to save this land. Your support was essential to the project's success."

A trail map for the Peppercorn Hill Conservation Area is available on the Town of Upton website.

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Photo Filename: SVT-KellyProperty-Trail.jpg

Photo Caption: The public can always enjoy this view from Peppercorn Hill, now that the Kelly Property has been conserved by the Town of Upton, Metacomet Land Trust, and Sudbury Valley Trustees.

ABOUT SVT

SVT is a member-supported non-profit organization that works to protect natural areas and farmland for wildlife and people in the 36 communities that surround the Sudbury, Assabet, and Concord Rivers. *SVT, 18 Wolbach Road, Sudbury, MA 01776.*

ABOUT MLT

Metacomet Land Trust is a non-profit, tax-exempt conservation organization which preserves natural resources in Upton and 14 other south-central Massachusetts towns. MLT is member supported and depends on an all-volunteer board of directors as well as gifts, memberships, and grants from both public and private sources to achieve its mission. MLT currently owns more than 600 acres of conservation land and holds conservation restrictions on 352 acres. Properties conserved by Metacomet are located in Bellingham, Blackstone, Franklin, Mendon, Millville, Millbury, Northbridge, Norfolk, Sutton, Upton, Uxbridge, and Wrentham. *MLT, PO Box 231, Franklin, MA 02038*

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