



The Metacomet Land Trust is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization dedicated to the protection of open space and natural resources in South Central Massachusetts. Metacomet proudly serves the communities of Bellingham, Blackstone, Douglas, Franklin, Hopedale, Mendon, Millbury, Millville, Norfolk, Northbridge, Sutton, Upton, Uxbridge, Webster, and Wrentham

**Please Join Us for Our Annual Meeting on Wednesday, June 21, 2023  
at 6:30 at Uxbridge High School, 300 Quaker Highway in Uxbridge.**

The business meeting will be followed at 7:00 pm by a program on  
“**Massachusetts Cold Water Streams and the Fish That Live in Them**”  
presented by Rebecca Colby, Aquatic Biologist for MassWildlife.



The program is open to the public and the high school is  
handicapped accessible.

### 2023 Annual Meeting Agenda

- I. Meeting Called to Order
- II. 2022 Annual Meeting Minutes
- III. 2023 Annual Report, Treasurer’s Report and Financial Statement
- IV. Election of Directors to the Board
- V. Vote on amending Metacomet Land Trust’s articles of organization
- VI. Adjourn

#### Proxy Vote:

**If you are not able to join the annual meeting**, please fill out and return this portion as your proxy. This will count toward the required quorum of 20 voting members or 20% of all dues-paying members (whichever is larger). Your proxy instructs Lisa Moczynski, President, or Russell Holden, Vice President, to act on your behalf.

METACOMET LAND TRUST 2023 ANNUAL MEETING MEMBER PROXY. I authorize MLT Board President Lisa Moczynski or Vice President Russell Holden to exercise my vote at the 2023 Annual Meeting for the ELECTION OF BOARD MEMBERS, APPROVAL OF 2022 MEETING MINUTES, APPROVAL OF THE 2023 ANNUAL REPORT, and any MOTIONS that come before the membership.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE:: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail your proxy to Metacomet Land Trust, PO Box 231, Franklin, MA 02038 to arrive no later than Monday, June 19, 2023. You may also simply photograph the signed form and email the photo to [info@metacometlandtrust.org](mailto:info@metacometlandtrust.org).

***We Love Where We Live – And We Know You Do, Too!***

## President's Message

### 1,000 acres preserved!

We celebrated the passing of a milestone -- 1,000 acres preserved! We achieved this through ownership (in fee) or through partnering with a private owner or municipality to hold a conservation restriction thus preventing the land from being developed. This was such an exciting moment in our organization's history and it happened at the very end of the year as we received two very special donations (see the Conservation update on page 7).

Our other exciting news is the long-awaited transfer of an affordable housing property to the Town of Franklin's Housing Authority. The house had been foreclosed on and a bank had transferred the house to the US Housing and Urban Development (HUD), but they never gave Metacomet Land Trust (MLT) the option to purchase it as required by our ground lease terms. Through the efforts of our elected delegation including Senator Ed Markey and his staff and State Representative Jeff Roy, as well as the Franklin Administrator Jamie Hellen and Town Attorney Mark Cerel, we were able to wrestle the house back and convince the bank to deed it to the Housing Authority. Metacomet then deeded the land to the Town of Franklin. This property is now permanently in their affordable housing stock. We are exceedingly grateful to attorney Michael Doherty for his guidance and unflagging determination to see this through on behalf of MLT.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank the people of Northbridge who voted at town meeting to acquire the nearly 100 acres known as Castle Hill Farm. Ten years ago Metacomet initiated a similar attempt to save this incredible property but we were unsuccessful. A decade later we are delighted that it actually happened and we are looking forward to holding the conservation restriction that provides for passive recreation and prevents future development on the property. Hooray!

There is so much more ahead as we continue to work with and support landowners who want to preserve and protect their property. We also work with state agencies and other non-profits in the region to protect critical and core habitats. Not sure what those are? Check out the new BioMap3 at [Mass.gov/biomap](https://www.mass.gov/biomap).

Last but not least – we are excited to enjoy the luxury of meeting in person! Please come to our business meeting and program featuring our cold-water fisheries on June 21st. I so look forward to seeing you!

Most humbly and in conservation,

*Lisa Mosczynski*

Lisa Mosczynski, President

## Attention all Members

At our April 20, 2023 board meeting, the directors voted to amend Metacomet Land Trust's (MLT) articles of organization. These changes will serve to clarify the organization's geographic area, membership requirements, PURPOSE and succession of its assets should it ever need to dissolve

A copy of the original articles and the red-lined version with changes can be found on our website ([www.MetacometLandTrust.org](https://www.MetacometLandTrust.org)) for your further review.

Motion: That the membership of the Metacomet Land Trust, at its duly advertised Annual Meeting of June 21, 2023, hereby changes its Articles of Organization as revised and printed in the document dated May 15, 2023.

Should this motion pass by a 2/3rds vote the officers will then proceed to file the revised articles with the Commonwealth's Secretary of State.

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## Board of Directors

The Metacomet Land Trust is governed by a Board of Directors elected by our members to three-year terms. Our Board of Directors includes representatives from towns throughout the service area, each of whom brings years of experience in local conservation and planning. You are welcome at all Board meetings; please email us to receive advance notice.

|  |                            |
|--|----------------------------|
| <b>President</b> - Lisa Moczynski, Douglas       | (term expires 2023) *      |
| <b>Vice-President</b> - Russell Holden, Uxbridge | (term expires 2025)        |
| <b>Treasurer</b> - Susan Speers, Franklin        | (term expires 2025)        |
| <b>Secretary</b> - Patrice Murphy, Mendon        | (term expires 2024)        |
| Tom Bik, Blackstone                              | (term expires 2024)**      |
| Peg Rothwell, Hopedale                           | (term expires 2024)        |
| Barbara McNamee, Northbridge                     | (term expires 2025)        |
| Steven Gniadek, Northbridge                      | (term expires 2025)        |
| Doug Williams, Princeton/Norfolk                 | (term expires 2025)        |
| Michael Rodriguez, Providence                    | (term expires 2023)*       |
| Mike Penko, Upton                                | (term expires 2024)        |
| Christine Scott, Upton                           | (term expires 2025)        |
| Ann Hanscom, Uxbridge                            | (term expires 2023)*       |
| Kyle Pribish, resigned                           | (term expires 2024) open   |
| Larry Rettman, resigned                          | (term expires 2023)** open |



\*\* Founding Board Members, \* Members' terms expiring

## Mitigating the Mustard

Volunteers at the "Mitigate The Mustard" event on May 6 at the Szerlag Farm Preserve completely filled 12 contractor-sized trash bags of Garlic Mustard and litter. They put their backs into pulling the highly invasive weed so that native plants can have a chance to grow.



Coordinated by Metacomet Land Trust's directors Steve Gniadek and Barbara McNamee both residents of Northbridge, over a dozen students and adults pulled the blooming invasive plants from the 26 acre preserve at the end of Roosevelt Drive.

Gniadek who is an invasive plant expert, explained that the volunteers' work will pay off in many ways. "We stopped another year's worth of pollination needed to create seeds, contribute to their seed bank and spread further, continuing their alteration of the local plant populations and environment."

Each individual plant produces anywhere from 600 to 8,000 seeds and can quickly outcompete native vegetation. Once established, it will prevent native plants from growing. Those native plants are critical to the health and welfare of our pollinators as well as diverse bird and mammal populations.

## How To Reach Us at The Metacomet Land Trust

Call us at 508-271-7131

Email: [info@metacometlandtrust.org](mailto:info@metacometlandtrust.org)

Website: [www.MetacometLandTrust.org](http://www.MetacometLandTrust.org)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MetacometLandTrust/>

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## 2022 Annual Meeting Minutes

The 2022 Annual Meeting was held on June 16, 2022, virtually online and via phone, due to the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions. Having a quorum present, the Meeting was called to order by President Lisa Mosczynski at 6:35 p.m.

She welcomed the audience and recited the organization's mission. She thanked the participants for being patient in attending yet another virtual meeting.

A motion was made by Tom Bik and seconded by Chris Scott to accept the 2021 Annual Meeting Minutes. Motion passed.

A motion was made by Peg Rothwell and seconded by Michael Angelo Rodriguez to accept the 2022 Annual Report, Treasurer's Report and Financial Statement. Motion was approved.

The meeting's business then moved to the Election of Directors to the Board. Susan Speers, Russ Holden, Doug Williams, Barbara McNamee and Christine Scott were all nominated. A motion to re-elect the slate was made by Tom Bik and seconded by Russ Holden. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion to adjourn was made at 6:55 pm by Christine Scott and seconded by Susan Speers. The motion was approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Patrice Murphy, Secretary

### Help us continue our conservation work for the next generation!

Have you renewed your membership for 2023? **Membership dues are \$25 for a calendar year.** Your dues and donations help us to continue our work of land preservation, conservation, and environmental education.

To join or renew your membership in the land trust, please fill in below and mail to

Metacomet Land Trust, P.O. Box 231, Franklin, MA 02038

|            |           |       |           |           |       |
|------------|-----------|-------|-----------|-----------|-------|
| Friend     | \$ 25.00  | _____ | Forester  | \$ 250.00 | _____ |
| Steward    | \$ 50.00  | _____ | Protector | \$ 500.00 | _____ |
| Naturalist | \$ 100.00 | _____ | Other     |           | _____ |

I would like to make an additional gift to the Metacomet Land Trust. Please apply my gift towards:

Metacomet Land Preservation Fund \_\_\_\_\_

NAME(S): \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

Yes! I am interested in volunteering! \_\_\_\_\_

Check out our Website: [www.MetacometLandTrust.org](http://www.MetacometLandTrust.org). You can renew online!



Marsh Marigold

## Treasurer's Report for the Calendar Year 2022

| <b>Metacomet Land Trust, Inc.</b>      |                     |
|--|---------------------|
| <b>Statement of Financial Position</b> |                     |
| As of December 31, 2022                |                     |
|  | Total               |
| <b>ASSETS</b>                          |                     |
| <b>Current Assets</b>                  |                     |
| <b>Bank Accounts</b>                   |                     |
| Unrestricted Operating Funds           | \$ 38,615           |
| <b>Temporarily Restricted Funds</b>    |                     |
| Berthelette Property Fund              | \$ 63               |
| Educational Materials Fund             | \$ 442              |
| Land Acquisition Fund                  | \$ 10,120           |
| Mendon Conservation Projects Fund      | \$ 7,481            |
| MLT Sign Fund                          | \$ 5,822            |
| Leland Wild Fund                       | \$ 113,760          |
| Fee Property Stewardship Fund          | \$ 715              |
| Szerlag Farm Property Fund             | \$ 1,000            |
| CR Protection Endowment                | \$ 12,660           |
| SNETT Special Projects                 | \$ 1,286            |
| Lake Manchaug Projects                 | \$ 3,694            |
| Whitney Trail Upton                    | \$ 1,582            |
| Bonner Property Fund                   | \$ 3,513            |
| Rugulieski Woods Fund                  | \$ 1,000            |
| <b>Total Bank Accounts</b>             | <b>\$ 201,753</b>   |
| <b>Accounts Receivable</b>             |                     |
| Lease Fees Receivable                  | \$ 45               |
| <b>Total Accounts Receivable</b>       | <b>\$ 45</b>        |
| <b>Other Current Assets</b>            |                     |
| CR Stewardship Investment Account      | \$ 21,567           |
| Undeposited Funds                      | \$ 13               |
| Prepaid Expenses                       | \$ 3,289            |
| <b>Total Other Current Assets</b>      | <b>\$ 24,868</b>    |
| <b>Total Current Assets</b>            | <b>\$ 226,666</b>   |
| <b>Fixed Assets</b>                    |                     |
| <b>Temporarily Restricted Funds</b>    |                     |
| Permanently Restricted Affordable Lots | \$ 341,707          |
| Permanently Restricted Open Space      | \$ 3,045,984        |
| Unrestricted Open Space                | \$ 109,100          |
| <b>Total Fixed Assets</b>              | <b>\$ 3,496,791</b> |
| <b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>                    | <b>\$ 3,723,457</b> |
| <b>LIABILITIES AND EQUITY</b>          |                     |
| <b>Liabilities</b>                     |                     |
| <b>Total Liabilities</b>               | <b>\$ -</b>         |
| <b>Equity</b>                          |                     |
| Unrestricted Assets                    | \$ 108,806          |
| Retained Earnings                      | \$ 171,426          |
| Temporarily Restricted                 | \$ 224,004          |
| Permanently Restricted                 | \$ 3,221,327        |
| Net Revenue                            | \$ (2,107)          |
| <b>Total Equity</b>                    | <b>\$ 3,723,457</b> |
| <b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY</b>    | <b>\$ 3,723,457</b> |

Financials are unaudited results for the calendar year 2022

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## Treasurer's Report for the Calendar Year 2022

We ended the year on an even keel, with only a small operating shortfall. MLT's available resources remain strong and we are seeking higher interest-rate CDs to help counter inflation. Some of our operating costs each year are covered by releases from restricted funds related to land acquisition and property stewardship. We continue to receive donations that are intended to fund needed activities on certain parcels. New in 2022 is a fund for stewardship of Rugulieski Woods in Upton. We invite members to support these special funds if you have a personal connection to a specific preserve.

Our investment account, designed for the long-term protection of our CR defense funds, registered a decline in value in '22. Our Investment Committee continues to monitor the choices made for this fund.

During 2022, the Board continued to study the valuation of our permanently conserved lands by municipal Assessors. We found an extremely wide variation in per acre values, with little adjustment for the fact that land under a Conservation Restriction or donated to us for public open space is essentially non-buildable. Accordingly, MLT has dropped the book value we are carrying on properties that are permanently restricted by a formal CR held by other land trusts or state or federal agencies. These changes result in a lower total value for our property at the end of last year.

Early this year, MLT made two significant transactions which will appear on next year's balance sheet. As intended by grants to MLT made over several years, MLT supported the permanent conservation of the Leland Wild property in Norfolk with a major grant in January. Also in January, after Bank of America finally transferred the affordable home at 813 Summer Street in Franklin to the Franklin Housing Authority, MLT deeded the permanently restricted land under that home to the FHA. We greatly appreciate the support of Rep. Jeff Roy and US Senator Ed Markey in smoothing the way for this outcome and for Attorney Michael P. Doherty for his pro bono representation throughout this saga.

Susan Speers, Treasurer, April 30, 2023



### Blackstone's 2023 Earth Day Celebration!

Metacomet Land Trust was proud to be one of the sponsors of the first annual Blackstone Parks & Rec Earth Day Celebration! We had a great time talking to people and handing out Douglas Fir seedlings to young and old.

We want to recognize the unflinching efforts of Kasey Bik and her father, Tom Bik, among others who worked so hard to coordinate vendors, food trucks, and the musical acts. Great job and we look forward to returning next year!

PHOTO – Young girl choosing a Douglas Fir to take home to plant

### Volunteers Welcome!

**Please Volunteer!** We need your help! The land trust depends on the generosity and spirit of volunteers to educate young and old about the environment around us and to help with due diligence in conducting stewardship inspections. Sign up at our website at <https://tinyurl.com/jcuhdevw> or email us at [info@metacometlandtrust.org](mailto:info@metacometlandtrust.org) or call us at 508-271-7131 if you can help.

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## Stewardship Report

During 2022, work continued on the Szerlag Farm Preserve in Northbridge. Bluebird nesting boxes, trail markers, and signage were installed, as well as a boulder barrier to protect the Szerlag pollinator meadow. Invasive Tree of Heaven, garlic mustard, Bradford pear saplings, and spotted knapweed were removed.

The parking area was repaired at the Hop Brook Preserve in Blackstone, and a farm gate was installed to limit access to a gas line easement. Trails were maintained at the Lady Bug Preserve in Franklin and the Szerlag Preserve. Tire removal continued at Stevens Pond.

Metacomet board members visited one of our preserves in Sutton with Cathy Taylor to view “Manitou” stones of likely indigenous origin thought to be part of the Lake Manchaug ceremonial stone landscape.

Russ Holden visited many of MLT’s 24 preserves and continues to report his keen observations of the fauna and flora on iNaturalist at

<https://www.inaturalist.org/places/search?utf8=%E2%9C%93&q=mlt&commit=Search>



A new mom at Szerlag

Feel free to explore our properties and add your own observations! All Metacomet preserves are open to the public. Miles of wooded trails are present at Franklin Woods and the Hop Brook, Stevens Pond, and Szerlag Farm preserves.

Metacomet directors visited all properties protected by conservation restrictions (CR) as part of our yearly CR monitoring program. We are working with the owners of several properties to resolve boundary encroachments discovered on their protected lands.

## Conservation Report

Metacomet conserved two new properties in 2022. The Trust received a generous donation from the Clapp family of 37.5 acres in Norfolk and Medfield. The property includes broad cattail wetlands and pine islands along the Stop River and will be known as the Arthur W. Clapp and Ann D. Clapp Preserve.



The Trust also acquired a 4.4-acre parcel in Sutton. The donors, Robert and Thomas Finacom, received a Conservation Tax Credit from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The mostly-wooded property borders an historic sluiceway that once provided water to mills in the nearby Manchaug Historic District. The Sutton Conservation Commission holds a conservation restriction on the property.

MLT worked with potential donors and partners on several promising land protection projects in Bellingham, Northbridge, Sutton, Mendon, and Douglas.

Metacomet Land Trust now owns 652 acres of Conservation Land and holds 12 conservation restrictions on 352 acres. The Trust also monitors a conservation restriction held by the Town of Mendon, co-owns 20 acres in Sutton with the Massachusetts Division of Conservation and Recreation Commonwealth and owns 7 affordable housing lots in Franklin. Properties conserved by Metacomet as of December 2022 are located in Bellingham, Blackstone, Franklin, Mendon, Millville, Millbury, Medfield, Northbridge, Norfolk, Sutton, Upton, Uxbridge, and Wrentham.

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